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# THE CONSOLATIONS OF A CRITIC

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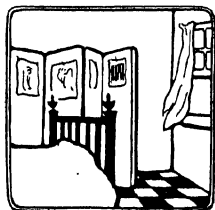
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AUTHOR OF

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H. R. H. AND A. Y. H.  
IN MEMORY OF A DAY IN THE DUNES  
BETWEEN THE PASTURES AND  
THE SEA, WHEN THE IDEA  
OF THIS LITTLE BOOK  
SEEMED POSSIBLE

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# THE CONSOLATIONS OF A CRITIC

## FIRST WEEK

HE TAKES TO HIS BED AND CONSOLES  
HIMSELF WITH ART

WHEN I consider the educational vicissitudes, æsthetic and spiritual, of my friend Claude Williamson Shaw, I know not whether to smile or to be sorrowful. He means so well; his enthusiasms are so rushing, his intentions so admirable, but they seldom last longer than morning freshness. The day wanes into commonplace; his fury of appreciation sinks to indifference.

I believe that his writings upon art have pleased a few, but his excursions into ideality do not seem to have any permanent effect upon his own character. He remains an inquirer, a pursuer. He follows the gleam, but it eludes him; it does not hover before his path to illumine and direct. He will always be an amateur. I am sure now that the book I wrote about sanguine, soft-hearted Shaw should have been called *The Education of an Amateur*, not *The Education of an Artist*.

## First Week

He is an eager, dim-sighted pilgrim, seeking the soul of the universe, thinking he can find it here and there, from this utterance, from that utterance, not knowing that the goal of the search is within himself, in the relation of his own minute centre to the centre of all being.

"Art!" he is fond of saying, "What is Art? Merely something that helps us to live, meeting a want when the want is there, showing to world-dulled eyes what clairvoyant eyes have seen." I, his life-long friend, have watched his many odd flirtations with art and ethics, his progressions and retrogressions, his few triumphs, his many failures. He spent months over the book that was to be called *Orvieto in the Sky*, a rhapsody on the vision of Turner, with a faint story of one he loved woven into it. That ramble of art and sentiment came to nothing, and unfinished also is his book called *Fifty Second-Rate Pictures*, and his studies of the *Lesser Masters*. His agent said: "But who knows anything about Lesser Masters, about Jan Van Scorel and Vroom the Seaman, and Bourse, and Simon Marmion? I don't, and if I don't the public don't, and don't want to know." Then there was his Vermeer of Delft craze, and his passing passion for Leeds, Lustre, and Lowestoft china, which revealed him as a precipitate collector. And all the while he was writing incessantly in papers and magazines. Prolific? He is a pluralist. Without a tremor he turns from Margaritone to Monet, from doubts about Cimabue to certainties about Cézanne.

## He Takes to His Bed

Yes; Shaw is popular, he makes as much money in a year as an auctioneer's clerk. He is always being asked for articles, and the applications always upset him, for he has a curious timidity, a nervous half-acknowledgment of self-mistrust which intermittently paralyses him. I think he always refuses a commission at first, and usually accepts it by the next post.

One day I noticed a queer change in him. He talked of brain-storms, and brain-fag, and he informed me that he found more pleasure in Tennyson's *Flower in the Crannied Wall* than in any other poetry except that of Crashaw. He also spoke of a new ethical society which he and his sisters, Faith and Honour, fresh from their great grief, were founding, the tenet of which was an entire reliance upon the source of life for more life. When I suggested that novelty was not the chief characteristic of the new society, he retorted that nothing was new, that everything was but a re-statement of old truths, that all art was derivative, that William Orpen was merely an early-Victorian of genius, and that Augustus John was but another pupil of Giotto.

At this point, being a man of peace, I turned the conversation to the subject of his collection of photographs of works of art, one of his hobbies, in the pursuit of which he has never faltered.

"I've rearranged them all on a perfect system," he cried gaily; "come and see the rearrangement!"

We passed a delightful evening. I do not suppose

## First Week

any private person owns such a collection of mounted photographs of works of art. We burrowed in art, declaiming our appreciations, insisting on them, recalling through the photographs the works we loved, tracing the pedigrees of our favourite artists through their art ancestry, and coming always in the end to the miracle of personality, the rare, the essential thing, the vital principle. Art that evening was what it should be always—refreshment, joy, consolation, a lifting of the curtain to visions of beauty, strength, austerity, encouragement, peace, and I know not what.

Then we turned from the photographs to consider the works on the walls. It was Claude's way to change them periodically. That evening, on one space hung six large reproductions of Michelangelo's frescoes on the Sistine vault—the majesty of art, the great, the simple idea greatly and simply done; on the facing wall were three of Rembrandt's etchings—the *Tobit Blind*, the *Sacrifice of Isaac*, and the *Prodigal Son*—the intimacy of art, poignantly pathetic: near them was the awful intensity of Durer's *Melancholia*, with his *Knight, Death, and the Devil*, and his *Christ upon the Mount*. And on a chair, a recent purchase, was a drawing by Peter De Wint, merely a tree-trunk, a few background bushes, and a quiet sky, an exquisite example of the tact of omission, making one wonder how so slight a thing can be so significant. "I can never change *them*," he said, waving from the Michelangelos to the Rembrandts;

## He Takes to His Bed

“they encourage me; they extend the horizon. One never tires of great art; it is a perpetual re-birth of emotion. Why is it that we cry over books and music, but never over pictures? What is there in pictures that——”

At this point his servant entered with the evening's post. As he read the letters the change in his manner was pitiable. He paced the room, his shoulders worked, his arms gesticulated, as if he were struggling to ease himself of a burden. “I can't stand it,” he cried. “Write! Write! Write! I've nothing more to say on anybody, from Praxiteles to Puvis. I'm exhausted; I'm dry as a dried-up Greek river-bed—and now look here.”

He tossed the letters to me. One was an application from an evening newspaper for an article on *The Hoardings as the Poor Man's Picture-gallery*; another was a request from the publisher of a costly work for a sectional essay on *The Desire to Please: being some Aspects of Eighteenth-Century French Art*; the third suggested that he should write a series of papers on *The Art Sense: its Nature, Development, and Value*. There was also an application from the Secretary of “The Lend-a-Hand Club,” asking if he would deliver an address before the members on that saying of Alfred Stevens (the Belgian, not the Englishman)—“In the studio of the most indifferent painter you will find some discarded sketch which is superior to the finished work.”

## First Week

"Well," I said, "why not? Lots of men would be delighted at this fourfold compliment. *The Art Sense: its Nature, Development, and Value* seems to me a delightful subject."

"*The Art Sense: its Nature*——" he repeated, moaning the words as if he had received a personal injury. "Nature! I'll go back to Nature, to the simple life. That's the only kind of existence that gives any lasting satisfaction. Simple faith, simple living, simple thoughts. I'll go back to Nature. I'll grow things for money, and paint for love. This incessant writing about other people's productions is desiccating. I'll be myself. I'll produce. I'll go back to Nature."

My experience is that when a man talks of 'going back to Nature, it is wise to acquiesce in his departure, and to await with equanimity his early return in an L.C.C. tramcar. So I masked my amusement and bade my distressed friend a cheerful good-night.

Strange as it may seem, Claude Williamson Shaw, in his own practical-idealistic way, did return to Nature. He apprenticed himself to the proprietor of a French garden in the south of England for one year, and proposed to announce to his editors that he had ceased to write about art, and was devoting his energies to intensive culture.

I pictured him in the French garden at six in the morning, carrying loads down the gravel paths; had visions of him peering through *cloches* at cos and cabbage lettuces, and lifting frames to assure

## He Takes to His Bed

himself that noble carrots and cauliflowers were still growing, and I wondered how soon this healthy change of occupation would brace his nerves.

The answer came sooner than I had expected. His sister Faith—or was it Honour? I could never tell the difference between the twins—wrote to me to announce that Claude had caught a severe cold, which developed into a mild attack of pleurisy, that he had fought against it, but that he had been placed *hors de combat* by falling on the garden path and straining a tendon in his leg. I hastened to his bedside and found him in a very comfortable environment, tended by his sisters, with the prospect of eight weeks' inaction. The roomy house on a spur of the Downs, which he had rented for a year, had been furnished and decorated by a doctor as a Home of Rest for his hypochondriacal patients; but, as the loneliness of the situation had added melancholy to their other ailments, the experiment failed financially, and the doctor had been quite willing to assign his Home of Rest to my restless friend. It was precisely what he desired. There were no muslin curtains to the tall windows: from two sides vast views of the Down country were visible, while the south prospect overlooked the French garden. There was one scheme of colour only in his large bedroom—his favourite green relieved by white.

I found Claude chastened, repentant, reflective, and inclined to be more interested in art than in intensive culture. He persuaded me easily to be his



## First Week

guest for a time. I consented readily, as no publisher was pressing me for my redoubtable work entitled *Good Bye, my Fancy*. The change from London, which I had left in the turmoil of an election, to this quiet retreat, where the soul could occasionally hear itself speak, was most agreeable. And the presence of those two grave ladies, who moved so noiselessly, and whose voices were so low; the one, the sufferer, who had cast her burden upon her Lord,—and the other!—her livelier individuality was, as it were, subdued, and from her now passed to her sister endless waves of sympathy, mutely articulate, that harmonised exquisitely with the aura of that quiet house.

And Claude was being restored: his desire to write seemed to be returning. Indeed, on the third morning of my visit, after a walk over the Downs, I found him sitting up in bed, scribbling on a pad with a lead pencil. The floor was strewn with sheets.

“Yes!” he said, “I’m making notes for *The Art Sense*. The desire came to me in the night, and Faith has gone to London for my photographs and art books. My idea is to lie here quietly, to recall pictures, drawings, sculptures, and to select from my photographs some that have for me a particular message of enjoyment or consolation. The chosen will not necessarily be well-known works, but each will have some particular significance. They will be,” he added laughingly, “*The Consolations of a Critic*. Yes: that’s better than *The Art Sense*. One of the





*W. A. Marshall & Co.*

BRONZE HEAD FROM A FIGURE OF "THE SLEEP-GOD"

## He Takes to His Bed

girls will arrange the photographs on that screen, and there each group will remain for a week, and I'll write about them. Oh! the joy of lying here and brooding on their meaning and value. For art is very simple, isn't it? A man makes something, and the emotion—call it what you will—that he had in making it just passes on to us. We hear his whisper or his cry, and something in us answers. Being dead, yet they speak. It's immortality, eh?"

It was some time before the first group was finally settled. It seemed an impossible task to select seven or eight from the hundreds of photographs so carefully arranged in their cases, and at one time Faith and Honour were almost in tears at the disarray of the room. Finally, Claude decided that the first group should exemplify repose, quietude, beatitude, eternal rest; and one morning I was called to his room to inspect the final selection.

"Behold," he cried, "*The Consolations of a Critic*—material for Chapter I. I've made the notes. I shall begin the autobiography this afternoon."

"Rather a mixed bag," I remarked.

"True! They range haphazardly from before the birth of Christ to the dying years of last century; but each has its significance."

"I feel strangely drawn to the Guidarelli reproduction. There is one way only, you agree surely, to portray death—the recumbent position. That prone figure of Guidarello Guidarelli, so still, has haunted

## First Week

me since I first saw it at Ravenna—Guidarelli, soldier and scholar, who was assassinated at Imola in 1501. *Life in Death* it has been called, for he looks as if the soul is still restless, despite the peace of the limbs; but how beautiful is the repose of the figure, so calm, so content to be in peace, unmindful of the suggestion of his uneasy end, marvellously shown on the face.

“Austere, inspired by the idea of remote, unmoved Deity, not of suffering man, is the bronze head of Hypnos, the Sleep-God, which may be the work of Praxiteles. They say that the beautiful figure of *Sleep* at Madrid, full-length, white, moving noiselessly, bending, as if hovering over the sleeper, is derived from this head of Hypnos and the statue which it once crowned. Gone is the figure, gone one of the night-hawk’s wings that were attached to each temple, gone the bright paste that once filled the eyes. But what a fragment, what a head! With what a shock of delight one comes upon it suddenly in the British Museum!

“And how well I remember my first glimpse of the *Sleeping Fury* in the Museo delle Terme in Rome. It was a spring morning, and I, free and unspoilt, was wandering through those cloisters that Michael Angelo built. I came to a little room, and there hanging upon the wall was a slab of stone with this *Furia Addormentata* carved in relief upon it by some nameless craftsman, to show the transition, while sleeping, of the Erinnyes into the Eumenides, vengeance into justice, agony to repose, contempt





SLEEPING FURY

*F. Alinari*

Second Century B.C. Museo delle Terme, Rome (*see* p. 10)

## He Takes to His Bed

to compassion, wildness to wisdom. Look at her. She will awake to peace, her anger gone, her eyes clear.

"Do you wonder to see little Barbara here? I couldn't leave her out. She lingers so sweetly and so modestly in Van Eyck's water-colour at Antwerp. She is so quietly happy, little St. Barbara, so absurdly large that she could hide easily in the folds of her ample garment most of the busy little workmen so busily building the Gothic cathedral. Yet it all seems quite natural. Van Eyck's deep sincerity did that, made the quaint vision credible.

"Why, I could have chosen all my examples from the Flemish and German primitives! Whatever their lives may have been, their art is all repose and serenity, and they loved to paint their holy women kneeling in quiet landscapes, dark here, golden there, always unruffled, such a scene as that which the Master of the Life of Mary pictures. Love and tranquillity, gentle flutterings of adoration, worship well attired, and nature always in harmony with the spirit of the pretty worshippers.

"Then you pass—for art, like loneliness, is really one family, and knows no frontier—from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, from the Master of the Life of Mary to Gustave Courbet, to nature—solemn, serious, realistic—to Courbet's *Old Oak at Ornans*. It fills the picture: that massive tree has no moods, its repose is eternal. I remember how fatherly it seemed hanging at the Pennsylvania



## First Week

Academy among the fresh, lyrical pictures of the modern American landscape school.

“And I remember the day—how well I remember it—when I went out from Washington to seek in Rock Creek Cemetery the figure by Saint Gaudens, a memorial to one whose life and death are unrecorded. Nobody has ever given a name to this initiate woman. What is she—Nirvana, Silence, Peace, Rest, Knowledge? One might easily miss the little path that leads to the cloistral bower where she sits. No sound from the outside world reaches to that fastness. I ascended two steps and stood upon a hexagonal paved plot, with a massive stone bench filling three sides of the hexagon. On the fourth sits the nameless figure—waiting.”

For a few moments we sat silent. It was quiet without. The sun was poised above the topmost hill. It was quiet within. Our hearts were at peace. Claude, motionless in his bed as Guidarelli on his couch of stone, the light of ecstasy in his eyes, looked beyond the windows as if he saw a vision: as if (he spoke of it afterwards) he had a sudden vision of that figure of Christ in the porch of Amiens Cathedral, kind, comprehending, standing with uplifted finger—waiting. I saw only slender, black-gowned Faith and Honour; and there was no past, only present, for as I looked, the twain in their long, straight black gowns, clear brows, rapt looks, and steadfast eyes, seemed in face and figure to be that very Florentine lady, Giovanna Tornabuoni, painted by Botticelli,

## He Takes to His Bed

she who stands, luminous as if in the sunshine, in the cracked fresco on the staircase of the Louvre.

Claude's eyes were still gazing through the window at the radiance of light that flooded all the land. And he whispered: "How certain things said and done in literature and art seem to add something to one's life: a head by Scopas, a landscape by Memlinc, an interior by Vermeer, a scribble of lines by Rembrandt, a lake by Turner, a cliff by Monet, the panoramic omissions of Lacoste, a modern room by Hammershøy, a Cameron silhouette, Sargent's vision of the dry East. And now, this moment, that saying of Sir Thomas Browne's has been flashed to me—'Light is the shade of God.'"

## SECOND WEEK

HE CONSIDERS THAT MIST-WREATHED MAASEYCK  
SHOULD HAVE MADE HIM A POET AND DESCRIBES  
“ THE MOST BEAUTIFUL BOOK IN THE WORLD ”

CLAUDE was better. When I entered his room, after an early morning stroll round the French garden, I found the injured critic declaiming poetry. His spirits were buoyant, his fancy was on the wing.

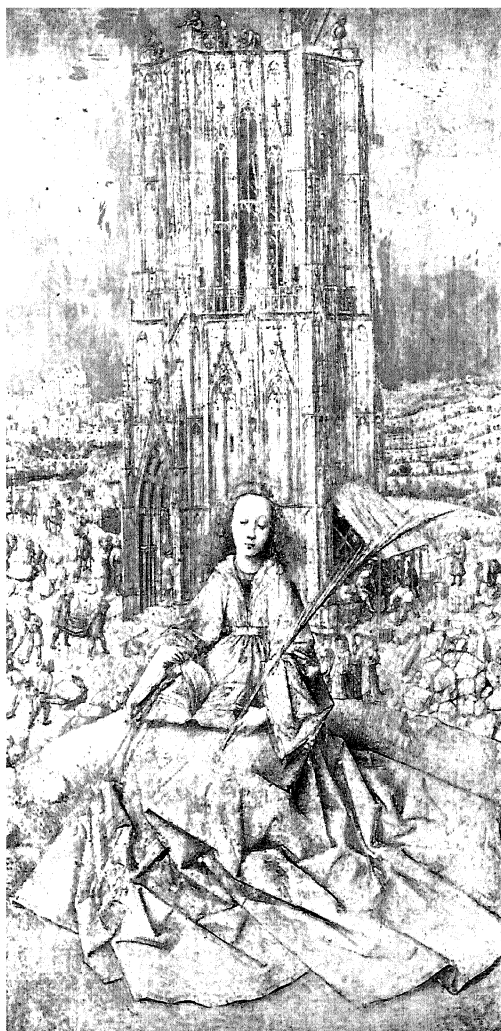
Ignoring my presence, he continued to repeat in a basso sing-song :

“ O thou, our Athens, violet-wreathed, brilliant, most enviable city ! ”

“ That’s a magnificent line,” he said at last, “ I’m trying to adapt it to Maaseyck or to Bourges, or to Tours, or even to the Duchy of Limbourg. But I can’t. I’m no poet.”

“ Rest content with being a dilettante,” I remarked. “ Why attempt so formidable a task ? ”

“ A whim ! a mere whim ! O, mist-wreathed Maaseyck, aureoled, forgotten——. The Van Eycks were born at Maaseyck, and that hamlet, that ‘ out-post of population,’ on a bend of the Maas was in the Duchy of Limbourg, and somewhere in the Duchy the de Limbourgs were born. Pol de



ST. BARBARA BEFORE A GOTHIC CATHEDRAL

From the water-colour by Jan Van Eyck, Antwerp



## The Most Beautiful Book in the World

Limbourg was the eldest of three brothers ; so was Hubert Van Eyck. Two families of genius, living at the same time, each out-distancing all rivals. World-famous then — world-famous now. About 1415, when Hubert Van Eyck was beginning that marvel of painting *The Adoration of the Lamb*, Pol de Limbourg and his brothers were finishing their share of the Duc de Berry's *Book of Hours*. There's something to think about. The Van Eycks, with whom as Fromentin said 'art achieved perfection in a first effort,' and the de Limbourgs who, in the priceless prayer-book known as *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, set the crown of perfection on the art that had been developing for centuries. I've seen the *Très Riches Heures*, and I proclaim that it is the most beautiful book in the world. This week you will see photographs of that missal on the screen. I hunted all Paris to get them. Did you ever hear of Pol de Limbourg ? ”

My answer was a polite negative.

“Pol was a genius, a realistic landscape-painter in miniature, a master of the craft when most landscape work was a mere conventional jumble. As a student of the moods of nature, he was ahead of the Van Eycks. They soared away from missals and *Books of Hours* ; they made all the art world ring with their altar-pieces and portraits ; they invented a new method of painting ; but Pol never produced an altar-piece or an easel picture. We know little about him. He may have been born in the Maaseyck

## Second Week

district, in that nest of monasteries and convents which had been nurseries of the arts and crafts for hundreds of years. In the church of Maaseyck they still show you two illuminated manuscripts done by two sisters of noble birth who, in the eighth century, founded the convent of Eyck, where Maaseyck now stands.

"The history of painting in the illuminated manuscripts fascinates me. It was so quiet, so intimate, so indifferent to competition, so informed with cloistral love and patience; though, to be sure, some of the monkish painters did add comments that are not always edifying. The paintings are as fresh and beautiful as when they were finished, and the covers of the books closed upon them. Why don't you give up your learned *Good Bye, my Fancy* and write a fanciful *History of Painting in Books*, with illustrations in colour?"

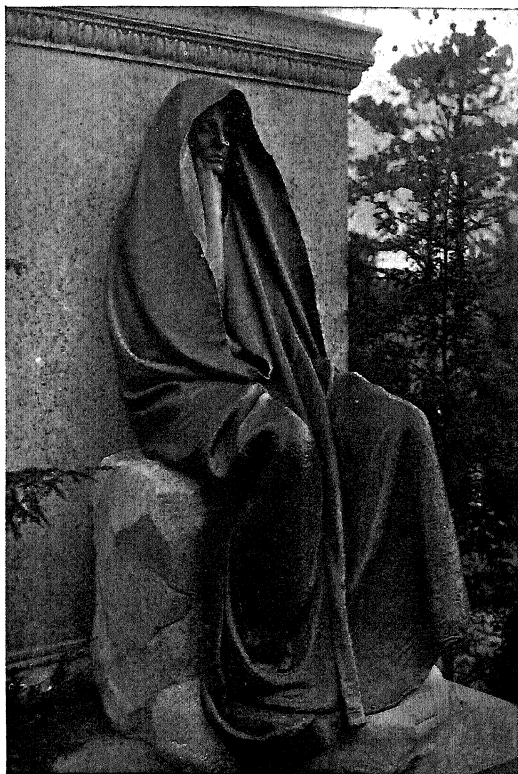
"I know nothing about it."

"Then write a book. That's the way to learn a subject."

"I'll see first what you have to say about Pol de Limbourg and *The Most Beautiful Book in the World*."

"Yes, of Pol, the true father of landscape painting, and of his work hidden away on the vellum pages of a locked book. Come back this afternoon, and I'll read what I have written, or talk of what I mean to write."

Faith and Honour had just finished affixing the photographs to the screen when I returned an hour before sundown.



*Curtis & Cameron*

FIGURE IN ROCK CREEK CEMETERY, WASHINGTON

By Augustus Saint Gaudens (*see* p. 10)





## The Most Beautiful Book in the World

“Don’t forget,” said Claude, “that those pictures of the twelve Months of the year by Pol de Limbourg and his brothers were all finished before 1416. Pol was the genius of the family, and we may without doubt ascribe the inspiration and execution of the Months designs to him. But first look at those towers against the sky, by Taddeo di Bartoli. Once Taddeo was a mere name to me, and his fresco of *The Death of the Virgin* in the Palazzo Pubblico at Siena, merely one of the innumerable early Italian pictures that one forgets ere one has left the building. But one day the Palazzo Pubblico at Siena became as significant to me as the Brancacci Chapel in Florence. You smile? That is because you don’t know. The Brancacci Chapel, that dim, damp, memory-haunted alcove in the Church of the Carmine, is the parent house, the family home, as it were, of Florentine art. Thither flocked the Florentines of the fifteenth century; generations of them passed in slow, astonished procession into that little chapel to gaze upon the frescoes by Masaccio, a youth of magnificent promise, a Michelangelo in the breadth and sweep of his design, who died at twenty-seven. And to the Palazzo Pubblico flocked the artists of the rival school of Siena, and others from distant lands to learn from Ambrozio Lorenzetti, Simone Martini, and Taddeo di Bartoli, whose works decorate the Palazzo. How often have I lingered there, roaming the rooms, visualising the forms of the artists who passed through those halls, their works

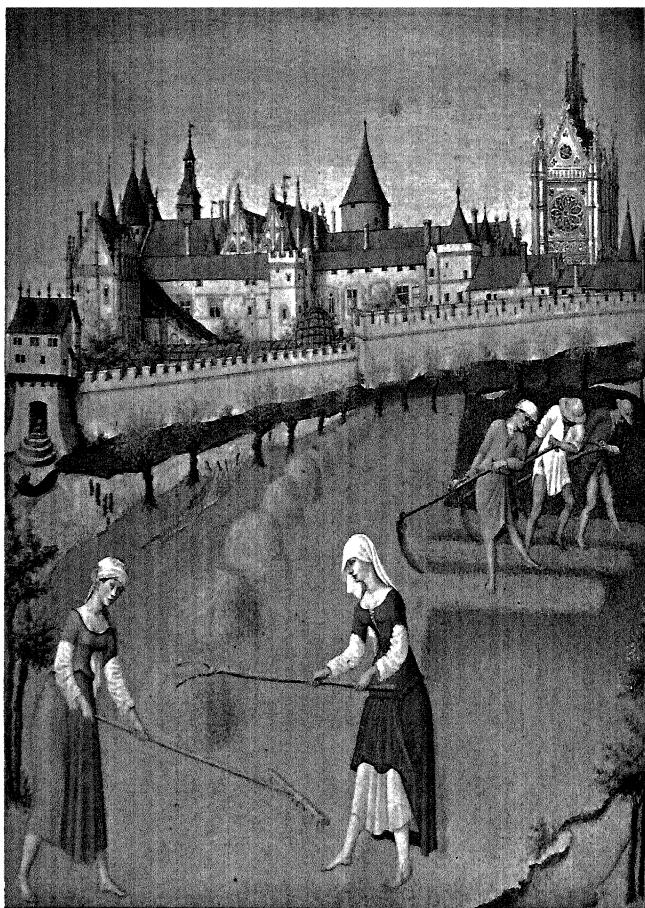
## Second Week

so familiar, their individualities so shadowy. If each had scrawled his name upon the walls, what a bed-roll it would make. Perhaps among the names we should find those of Hubert and Jan Van Eyck. Taddeo's few towers against the sky may have been the inspiration of the many towers that rise beyond the green meadow in *The Adoration of the Lamb*, and the inspiration also of the sun-flushed towers touched with the mystery of dawn, in Hubert's earlier picture *The Three Maries at the Sepulchre*. Perhaps Pol de Limbourg saw Taddeo's towers: perhaps the memory of them lingered in his quick brain when, in his renderings of the Months, he placed against the blue sky the palaces and castles of the Duc de Berry."

"When were Taddeo's towers painted?"

"In 1407. An early date, but although Taddeo, a pioneer in his way, emerged from the Byzantine twilight, his sky is still smeared with gold; but his massive hills, the hills of Siena, are a new vision, and new are his towers of the New Jerusalem, just old Siena changed by the eye of faith. Did he know, I wonder, how new his vision was, for neither Giotto nor Duccio ever did anything quite like that? Did he greet the Van Eycks and the Limbourgs in Siena and talk quietly to them in the old chapel of the Palazzo Pubblico? It may have been so. And I wonder if Taddeo ever made the long journey to Bourges, to the court of the splendid Duc de Berry, to watch Pol working on the wonderful *Book of Hours*. The sight of it would have astonished Taddeo; but





JUNE (LE PALAIS ET LA SAINTE CHAPELLE)

*Giraudon*

From "Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry," by Pol de Limbourg and his brothers, Chantilly

## The Most Beautiful Book in the World

he was too set to change. To a younger man the brilliant Pol might have opened a new world; to see was to steal in those days. Plagiarism was a compliment, not an offence.

"That *Book of Hours* three of us in this room have seen—Faith, Honour, and I. We shall never forget that treasure in the locked silver case, behind glass doors, in the library of the Musée Condé at Chantilly. Breathlessly we peered through the glass and deciphered the title, *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, and what a trouble we had to obtain permission to examine it. And do you remember girls, the small room hung in grey-blue containing forty minute, exquisite paintings by Fouquet severed from an illuminated manuscript? The delightful, impossible, beautiful *St. John in the Isle of Patmos* was one of them. It was Molinos' day, was it not? And we wrote an article connecting Pol with Molinos the Quietist. That was fun, wasn't it?"

Faith handed her brother a little sombre book.

"Yes," he mused, "this was what you were reading in the train going to Chantilly—Molinos the Quietist's *Spiritual Guide which Disentangles the Soul and leads it to the Fruition of Inner Peace*. That is what all good missalists do—pictorially. They lead you through pleasant paths by still waters to quiet happiness: they never affright you as—as Rubens does. The missalists are at peace with the world; Rubens exploits it."

"Ah, here is the article that I wrote, pasted between

## Second Week

the covers of Molinos. Good girls ! Somebody once said that when I read my own works, my voice affects the reverential inflections of a clergyman reciting the Litany. I'll repeat bits of the article, and I'll try to make my emotions seem casual.

“Molinos framed in words the ingathering of his soul. Pol de Limbourg recorded in colour the harvest of his eyes. He seems to have reached perfection in a stride. Between the years 1412 and 1416, assisted by his brothers, he painted, decorated, and lettered this *Book of Hours* for the Duc de Berry—then finished. Before he began it—silence. He lives by this book—an unparalleled production. The Bedford Missal is amateurish beside it.

“Into a chamber with tall windows overlooking the lake we were ushered, to a desk, to a seat at the desk, to moments of suspense, and then, with the air of a religious rite, the precious manuscript was placed before us, while the librarian hovered near, turning the leaves, uttering exclamations of delight. He did not leave us. None may look at the *Très Riches Heures* alone. For two hours we sat in the library of the Musée Condé poring over its beauties. The vellum pages are lettered and illuminated, and upon seventy-one of them there are pictures, each no more than eight inches by six. Botticelli, lingering sadly over his Dante illustrations, would have joyed to design the headlong fall of the revolting angels; those flaming wings of the happy souls in Paradise would have fired the pale imagination of Burne-Jones ;

## The Most Beautiful Book in the World

that Nocturne, with the star-sown sky, showing Christ in the Garden of Olives might be a Whistler. How did he do it? Where did this man of mystery, Pol de Limbourg, learn his craft? By what means did he reach perfection in a stride? His brothers, who helped him, were fine artists, and so was Jean Colombe, who in 1485, sixty-nine years after the death of the Duc de Berry, was requisitioned by the Duc de Savoie to complete the *Très Riches Heures*. Several of the pictures in the Missal are by Colombe, and, great artist though he was, it needs only a cursory glance to see how inferior is his work to Pol de Limbourg's.

"But, of all the delights of this book, the pictures that give the clearest idea of Pol de Limbourg's genius are his representations of the twelve Months—naïve and delightful landscapes. This quiet mediæval artist proclaims himself a most faithful and loving observer of nature, and the incidents of rural life during the progression of the seasons—the ways of birds and bees; the lie of snow on barns and trees; skaters, and women drying their skirts before fires; poppies that gleam in the track of the mower; bags of seed in the furrows waiting for the dip of the sowers' hands; a herdsman knocking acorns from the trees for his herd to eat; and in December, the kill in the open against a Bellini wood with the huntsmen beating the dogs off the prey.

"How did Pol de Limbourg learn the ways of Nature and of countrymen? The explanation, I think, is this: In the background of most of these



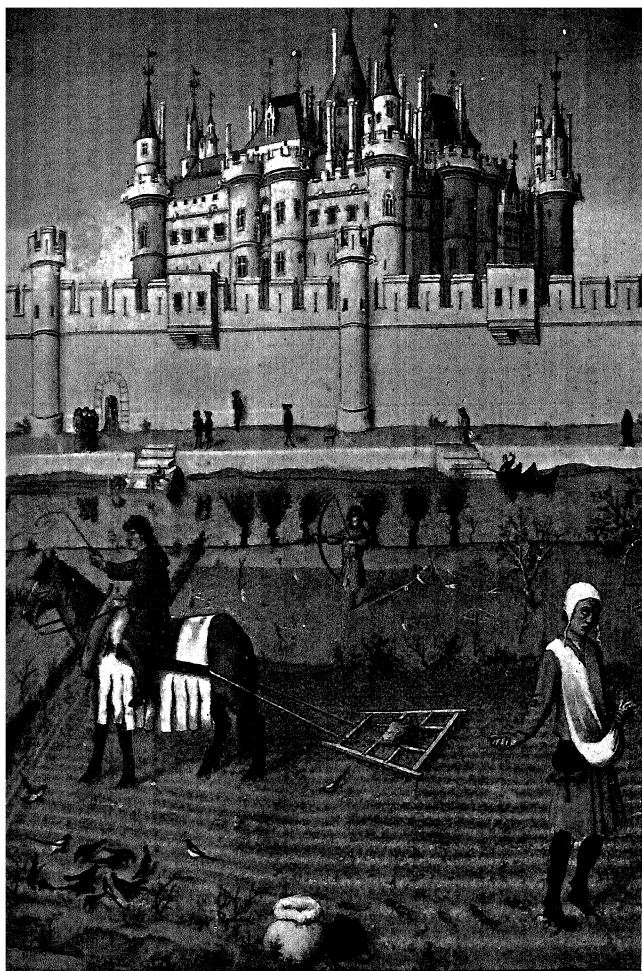
## Second Week

pictures of the Months rises, silhouetted against the heavens, one of the many castles belonging to the Duc de Berry, the red and blue-capped towers streaming up against the sky. Pol must have visited each castle in turn, and as he journeyed he noted all the happenings of rural France, and reproduced them lovingly for his patron. What an eye for truth and beauty! What powers of observation! What amazing skill! There it all is, passed on to us, quite fresh, quite lovely.

"Truly, this picture-book by Pol de Limbourg is a place where the dead live. So is the unadorned little volume by Molinos wherein he disentangles the soul and brings it homeward by the inward way."

"There," said Claude, when he had finished reading, "that is my view of Pol de Limbourg. He is without a peer. The only volume that approaches the *Très Riches Heures* is the *Heures de Turin*, painted about the same time. It was burnt—burnt in the fire at Turin in 1903, but happily not before it had been reproduced in facsimile. Some say that Hubert Van Eyck was the author of the paintings in the *Heures de Turin*. I like to think that he was. It makes the performances of those two families of genius still more wonderful. O, Limbourg! O, mist-wreathed hamlet by the winding Maas!

"But you need not go all the way to Chantilly to see a perfect book painting. There are several in London, Mr. Yates Thompson possesses a page from the manuscript of the *Faits des Romans* by



*Giraudon*

OCTOBER (LE LOUVRE)

From "Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry," by Pol de Limbourg and his brothers, Chantilly



## The Most Beautiful Book in the World

Jean Fouquet, a great artist, who was born at the time that Pol de Limbourg was painting the *Très Riches Heures*. Fouquet's splendid page, one of three that have escaped destruction, was painted in 1460. It shows *Cæsar Crossing the Rubicon*, a peaceful landscape, a blue winding river, Cæsar caparisoned in white and gold, a herald standing in the stream announcing his approach, and the little army, a blue ghostly band, waiting to advance, their helms and armour reflecting the light of this bright fairy-land. It is magnificent in its intimate reposeful beauty, and facing it, when it was shown at the National Gallery, was Rubens' magnificent, horrible, drunken Silenus: one a fifteenth-century master's vision, the other a master's vision of the 'awakened' seventeenth. Ugh! Would that I had been born in the fifteenth century. Would that I had been born earlier, when pious, pathetic, poignant *plein-air* Roger van der Weyden, Roger of the Pasture, made that enlarged miniature— isn't it beautiful?—showing St. Luke painting the Virgin. But we cannot escape from the Van Eycks. The Roger van der Weyden is but a simplification of the landscape background of Jan Van Eyck's Chancellor Rollin panel in the Louvre, with its two thousand tiny figures crowding the river town, that you see through the portico, open to the sky, open to the hills.

"Roger, like the others, learned from the Van Eycks, and we learn from Roger of the Pasture, how the patient painters in little worked. Observe Roger's idea of St. Luke, the patron saint of artists, beginning

## Second Week

a miniature. He has risen from his desk in the closet, has posed his lady in the large, sunny chamber, and kneeling, is making his picture, which afterwards will be emblazoned with gold and other lovelinesses. Sanctity within, and without, the wide world, Jan Van Eyck's wide world, simplified: Roger's own rendering of this scene in an earlier picture also simplified, the decorations of the chamber fewer, and the broad spaces of sky and river with the eternal hills beyond more childlike, as if he was trying to get back to the clearer, holier visions of youth.

"So the gate to landscape painting in pictures was opened, after Pol de Limbourg had flung it wide on the bright pages of a precious book. And that river beyond the chamber may be the Maas, and somewhere, unseen, the waters may be feeling for their level to that nursery of the crafts, where the Van Eycks and the de Limbours first saw the light and watched the beauty of the world from their outposts by the winding waterway. The consolation of it all. The dawning beauty. O world as God once made it! Dreams! Dreams! such dreams should have made me a poet, but they have not. I falter, I stumble by the way. I can journey no farther than:

"O mist-wreathed Maaseyck, aureoled, forgotten, unforgettable outpost. . . ."





CHRIST IN THE GARDEN OF OLIVES

From "Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry," by Pol de Limbourg  
and his brothers, Chantilly

### THIRD WEEK

HE RECALLS THE BEGINNING OF LANDSCAPE PAINTING  
AND EXTOLS A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY MASTER-  
PIECE

"Ah! landscapes," said I, looking at the upper row of photographs upon the screen—quaint, early landscapes. "And what have we here?—a painting, a study in tone—drawing a little wobbly, clouds somewhat cotton-woolly, sand rather soapy, but really not bad. It has feeling, and—— Why, it's signed C. W. S."

Claude Williamson Shaw threw the coverlet over the canvas.

"It's not for exhibition. I did it when I was in Holland. One can't help trying to paint landscape subjects in Holland—land of moist and shimmering distances, where Vermeer of Delft brought light magically into rooms, and where those modern masters of atmosphere and aerial loveliness, Jacob Maris, Mauve, and Weissenbruch refused to exchange the dream for the business."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Merely that in the old days, before the splendour of Titian and the magnificence of Rubens, land-

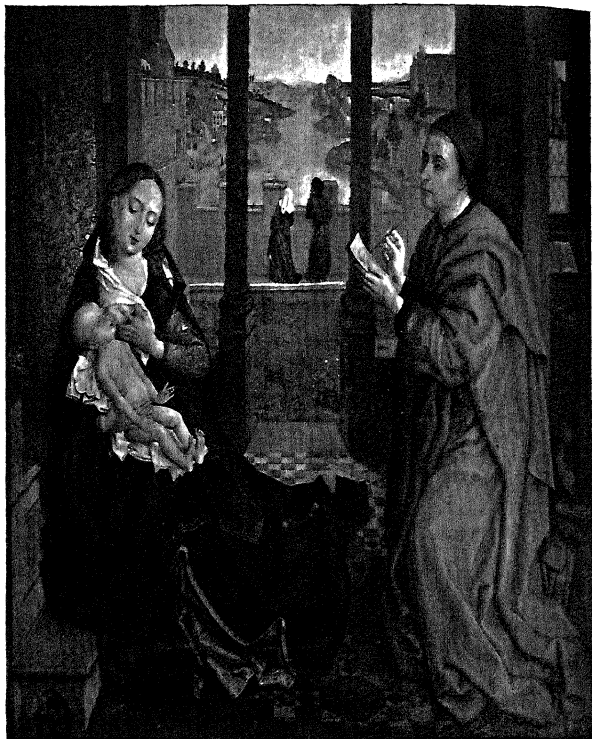


## Third Week

scape was almost always merely an accessory in a picture, a thing of small account, done for joy, glimpses of sun-diffused pastures where it is always afternoon, seen through the windows of primitive pictures. Memlinc and Roger of the Pasture loved to paint little lakes, winding roads, meadows, and blue-topped towers, in their 'make believe' light as Ruskin called it—lights of pearl not of lime. How beautifully Ruskin wrote on the Masters of Peace who painted the day of Paradise. Sometimes they attempted real landscapes, but that was only because such themes as *The Flight into Egypt* demanded a landscape treatment. Even then they kept their dream, their vision of a clear and sunny Paradise untroubled by anxiety or weather.

"The change began when Titian strode into the arena and painted four mighty businesslike pastorals. Then the doors of landscape were indeed opened. A hundred years later, Rubens, in his own royal, boisterous way, flung them wider when he became a country gentleman and painted with magnificent ease the pleasaunces of his magnificent estate. Then landscape painting became a business: the dream had passed. Claude and Poussin, and all the others opened their palatial establishments, and noblemen bought their grandiose wares. But I doubt if there was much real love for nature in their connoisseurship. When the giants died and classical landscapes fell out of fashion, even the Barbizon men, even Turner and Constable did not really make landscape





ST. LUKE PAINTING THE MADONNA

*Hanfstäengl*

From the picture by Roger van der Weyden. Hermitage Gallery, St. Petersburg

## The Beginning of Landscape Painting

popular. For years painters starved through loving Nature overmuch. To-day it has become a business again, but not entirely, not with everybody. Some have recovered the dream, and among them are those three Dutchmen: Jacob Maris, Mauve, and Weissenbruch. I know the Dutch school pretty well, I lived in Holland once. And one spring I painted the picture now mercifully hidden under this coverlet. Its title is *The Widow's House*.

"That dim dwelling with the green shutters, the silver sand in the foreground, and the thin trees against the evening sky, belonged to an old Dutch peasant woman, a little infirm body who always spoke of herself in the third person as *het Vrouwtje* (the little Frau). She had been bedridden for two years. I used to pay her a brief visit morning and evening. I can see now the pale, contented, wrinkled face propped up on the pillows, the head swathed in a muslin cap, and the brown, kind, estimating eyes shining out from the pallor of the skin. When I asked her daughter how the old woman spent the weary hours, she answered:

" 'Reading her Prayer-book, praying for those she knows, and also, Mynheer, for those she doesn't know, and looking at the Mauve pictures. She says they make her happy, and that her prayers seem more real when she is happy.' "

"What do you think the Mauve pictures were? Merely a series of coloured supplements issued by the Dutch newspaper *Het Nieuws van den Dag*.

## Third Week

Her favourite was that water-colour in the Rijks Museum of an old woman hanging out clothes to dry in the dunes—a simple enough subject, but what a beautiful thing it is—atmosphere, space, breezes, suffused pale sunshine. It gave her joy, and also peace. That's a mighty destiny for art. Thank God, it often happens. You remember that story of Sir Robert Peel, how in the midst of harassing official business he would steal into the National Gallery and gaze at Ruisdael's *Forest Scene*, finding in it 'refreshment to his very soul.'

"I don't mind confessing that I began that tone picture of *The Widow's House* in the hope that it might give joy to the old lady and ease her days a little, as the Mauve had done so abundantly. But it was not to be. I couldn't finish it; I hadn't the knowledge. I stopped when the difficulties began, or rather the difficulties stopped me."

From a corner of the room a quiet voice remarked "I like it quite as well as any of the Mauves."

"Thank you, Faith," he said. "But we like Italy still better, don't we? Oh, what days we had hunting for early landscapes, neglecting all the other pictures, and pouncing upon a new discovery with the ardour of *bric-à-brac* bargain-seekers. The early landscapes we found were often mere interludes in the painter's working life. We gave the men new names—friendly names. There were 'The Man who Looked through a Window,' 'The Flower Lover,' and 'Sunny Jim.'

## The Beginning of Landscape Painting

“‘The Man who Looked through a Window’ was Ambrozio Lorenzetti and the window through which he looked was in the Sala del Pace of the Palazzo Pubblico of Siena, and the date was between 1338 and 1340, long before the Van Eyck and Limbourg brothers were born; and, believe me, it was the most natural thing in the world that, for two years, off and on, Ambrozio should look through that window.”

“You will never be a great writer,” I remarked, “because you take such a long time to come to the point.”

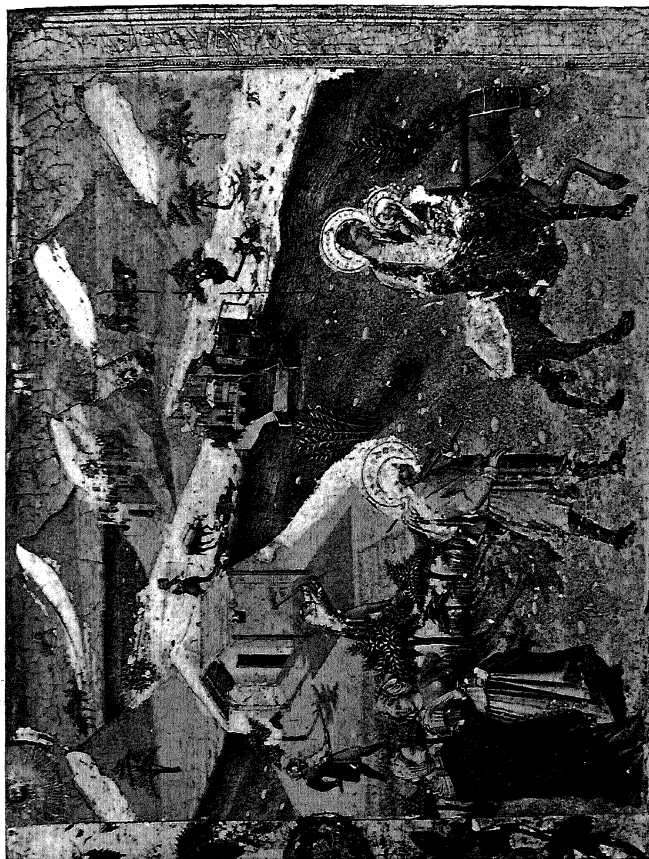
“Be patient. Ambrozio had been commissioned by the Duke to illustrate on a wall of the Palazzo Pubblico, among other subjects, the results of Good Government. I have no doubt that he based his design on the spectacle of peace and prosperity that greeted his eyes when he looked through the tall window of the Sala del Pace. The fresco is faded almost to the hue of ashes, but you can trace the resemblance of the land without to the view on the peeling wall which was virtually an inventory of everything that happens under good government in husbandry, commerce, and sport. The fresco isn’t exactly consolatory, but it is quaint, and nearly as interesting as a newspaper.

“Ambrozio’s landscape was a commission, and so was the great *Adoration of the Magi* in Florence by Gentile da Fabriano. He is our Flower Lover. He loved flowers: into the very interstices of the frame of this picture he introduced them—the iris,

### Third Week

the pink, the lily, the violet. And when he had completed his commission to illustrate *The Adoration of the Magi*, he turned to the predella, and, in the left panel, he painted a little *Flight into Egypt*, thus becoming, at the age of sixty-three, a landscape painter. How lovingly he lingered on the orange trees, on the rose-bush in the corner, on the stones in the foreground, on the ploughed fields and formal hills, and on the sunshine that gilds the slopes. He made a hard globe to represent the sun. It was he, Gentile de Fabriano, flower lover, not Claude, as Ruskin said, who first set the sun in the pictorial heavens. I forget the picture, but I shall always remember the little landscape predella, so naïve, so simple, so dear. Faith made a copy of it in colour, and Honour a copy of another panel of the predella where the shepherds see the celestial vision in a star-sown sky, gold stars on a blue background, and a crescent moon. And I wrote a sonnet-sequence on the flowers and the young moon and the star-sown sky. May you see it? Oh, no! Perhaps I'll print it in a book I'll write one day on the *Predella in Art*, exquisitely illustrated. People rarely look at a predella, but it is often much more intimate and beautiful than the big picture it accompanies. I wonder if I may liken the little lyrical panels of a predella to the songs that Shakespeare dropped into the fabrics of his plays.

“ ‘Sunny Jim’ also painted a *Flight into Egypt*. No, even now I cannot call him by his right name,



THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT  
From the picture by Giovanni di Paolo, Siena





## The Beginning of Landscape Painting

which was Giovanni di Paolo. Faith and Honour must take the blame. They discovered him one happy morning in the gallery at Siena. Faith screamed with delight, yes, literally screamed. I ran towards her, and found her on her knees peering at this preposterous, delightful landscape. It was painted probably twenty years after Gentile's version. He was an accomplished artist. Sunny Jim is a bright, precocious, original child. Do you see what he has done? Discontented with the traditional gold sky of Siena, he makes his sky blue, and smears the sunny sides of the hills with gold, and he has introduced shadows, strong, unmistakable shadows, and although perspective was beyond him, he has really tried to paint what he saw in the routine of the seasons as he took his daily walks around Siena. It's curious to look from this landscape of the mid fifteenth century to the Mauve of the late nineteenth: one crowded with incidents, the other simple as dawn: one struggling to obey the sun, and smearing gold with childlike fervour on hills, buildings, and figures, the other suffusing the sun colour everywhere, illumining everything with it. Mauve knew that there is only one principal interest in a landscape—light.

“Now look at the second row of photographs upon the screen. Close your eyes on the joy and glare of Siena, and pass in imagination to the north, the grave north, where the Master of the *Life of Mary* lived, master for years of the school of Cologne where I suppose he painted the eight panels illus-

## Third Week

trating the life of Mary, from which he takes his name. He is one of the Masters of Peace: his skies are gold, and there is no sunshine in his picture of *The Visitation*, only the sweet and pearly light of his earthly Paradise. Will one of you find the passage in Ruskin ? ”

Faith read aloud in a clear, low voice: “None of these lights are flashing or blinding; they are soft, winning, precious; lights of pearl, not of lime: only, you know, on this condition, they cannot have sunshine: their day is the day of Paradise; they need no candle, neither light of the sun, in their cities; and everything is seen clear, as through crystal, far or near.”

For some minutes Claude gazed at *The Visitation*, a happy smile on his face. Then he continued:

“And about the time that this grave sane Master of Peace of Cologne was laying down the brush to journey into a more silent land than he ever painted, wayward, fantastic Piero di Cosimo of Florence was preparing to paint his *Death of Procris*, that sunny dream of a pagan world. Again how strange a contrast! But this cunning, quaint Piero, this odd and arrogant man, produced in his *Death of Procris* a masterpiece, as simple in its way as the panel of *The Visitation*—in the foreground the eternal themes, love, friendship, and death; in the distance the unchanging, the consoling element—Nature.

“This tracing of the evolution of landscape painting bewilders while it fascinates. By the by, are you a



*Bruckmann*

THE VISITATION  
By the Master of "The Life of Mary." Pinakothek, Munich



## The Beginning of Landscape Painting

Patinirite or an Altdorferite? They were contemporaries, although there is no record that they ever met, and each has been called the father of landscape painting, incorrectly in each case. Patinir saw Nature largely, broadly; Altdorfer with extraordinary particularity. I love Patinir; I admire and am amused by Altdorfer. You know that lovely crystalline landscape by Joachim Patinir in the National Gallery, like a milky sapphire, with the blue placid river winding at the base of the white cliffs and an artist sketching in the foreground, perhaps Joachim himself. It may have been this very picture that drew from Albert Dürer the reference in his diary to 'Joachim, the good landscape painter.'

"I seem to see Patinir poised over the earth, like some complacent bird finding it tranquilly beautiful. Altdorfer peered at life and found it intricately amusing. Altdorfer's fancy was pagan. His *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* would certainly have amused Piero di Cosimo. It's a little picture; I find it merry. I once spent nearly an hour at Berlin going over every inch of it, but the detail of this *Rest* is nothing compared with the detail of his *St. George* at Munich. If you want to go mad, try to count the leaves in that picture.

"I am a Patinirite. The broad vision quietyens: detail fatigues me. I turn with relief from that busy *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* to the Patinir, and then to the landscape with the great sky by Hercules Segers, one of the lesser Masters of the Netherlands,

### Third Week

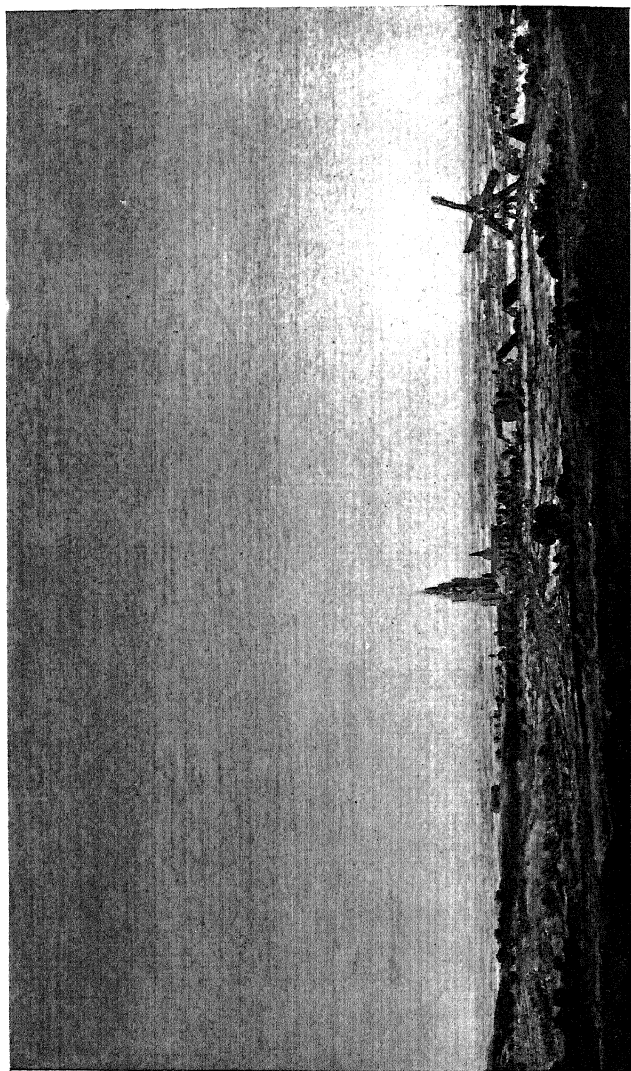
who had a deal of greatness in him, and who influenced Rembrandt, showing him the poetry of landscape, stimulating him to pursue it. When Rembrandt died six of Segers' landscapes were found among his effects. That bird's-eye view of a Dutch village, his modest sunset dream, is full of a sweet melancholy from the zenith to the horizon which is still warm from the rays of the setting sun. There is no sign in any of Segers' works of the troubles that beset this pioneer of modern landscape painting. Almost half the documents relating to him consist of confessions of debt. He died in penury, but he lives immortal in those wonderful sheets of coloured etchings in the Amsterdam Print Room, as Leonardo lives in the portfolios of drawings at Windsor. Poor Segers! Brave artist. Obloquy in life, then forgotten, then rediscovered and prices paid on a single day at auction for a remnant of his works that would have kept him in affluence all his days. But he had his interior joys. He must have known perfect happiness when he was creating. He had the art sense. When I am well I'll re-visit Amsterdam and find my way again through his marvellous, intricate coloured etchings. And then I'll go down to The Hague. Do you know why I shall go to The Hague?

"To see Paul Potter's *Bull*?"

"No, sir, that will not be the object of my visit to The Hague; although, mind you, the landscape part of it is fine. But I have a friendly feeling for







*Berlin Photograph Co.*

A DUTCH VILLAGE

## The Beginning of Landscape Painting

that overrated picture, because the first article I ever wrote was called *Bulls* by Paul Potter. It was humorous."

"Why shall I go to The Hague?" he continued, after a pause, to give me an opportunity of making a sarcastic remark. "Why shall I go to The Hague, Faith?"

"To see the sunset Daubigny in the Mesdag collection?"

"Why shall I go to The Hague, Honour?"

"To see the Weissenbruch at the Municipal Museum?"

"You are both partly right. But the real reason of my journey to The Hague will be, as it always is, to see one particular picture by a Dutchman of rare vision, born 1632, died 1675, who, as a painter, is, I think, one of the most accomplished and fascinating beings who have ever lived—Vermeer of Delft. He had not Rembrandt's spiritual imagination or his tired wings, but he could paint divinely.

"I go about the adventure in my own way. I enter the Mauritshuis at The Hague, I walk upstairs, I pass into a room where four Rembrandts fill one of the walls—a golden and fuzzy *Homer*; a study of *Two Negroes*; that magnificent, tragic glimpse into the depths of melancholy called *Saul and David*; and his own sad, ruggedly modelled portrait. It is a wall of muddled, fumbled genius—essential Rembrandt, seer, brooder, materialist, spiritualist, who scaled heights and looked into gulfs, and of whose

## Third Week

pictures you cannot say that all are perfect because, like Turner, this mortal was never content with mortal tools. I absorb those mountainous fumbblings of genius, those involved communings in jewelled mud of a soaring spirit with matter, and then I turn suddenly to the other wall—to Vermeer's *View of Delft*. O the beauty, the serenity of it! It's like coming home to your own fresh garden after a rough, dusty journey.

"I protest to you that I can hardly ever suppress a shout of pleasure when I face that view of Delft, so sane, so quiet, so radiant. Rembrandt stormed the heights, battled with the gods: Vermeer stayed quietly on the earth and just played the lover to light. What was his secret, his riddle? How did he contrive his quality, his pearly glows, his sense of beauty and propriety? How did he get the suspended atmosphere into this picture, the ineffable patine? And how, you may ask, did he contrive that tremble of the lower lip in his exquisite *Portrait of a Young Girl*. This man of mystery, whose only interests were in the beautiful things of the world transfigured by light, pretends to reveal his secret in the portrait he painted of himself at work in his studio. Exasperating Vermeer! He might have told us in paint what his face was like. And did he always work in those magnificent clothes, and wasn't the tiled floor cold to his feet, and of what intensity were the eyes of this man who saw so delicately and deeply, who sits there quietly watching his model

## The Beginning of Landscape Painting

in the light, leaving his secret untold, his riddle unanswered ?

“To think that I dared to attempt to paint a picture of atmosphere and light in the land where Vermeer painted. Girls, carry it away and hide it in the darkest corner of the darkest cupboard. Yes ! when I am well and can walk, I’ll postpone my Intensive Culture apprenticeship. I’ll go straight to The Hague, and I’ll copy and re-copy and re-copy, *A View of Delft* until I wrest the secret from that shining canvas. It will be an adventure among pigments.”

“And you will write an article upon the adventure ? ” I remarked.

He nodded.

“Shall you call the article *I and Vermeer of Delft*.”

He smiled.

## FOURTH WEEK

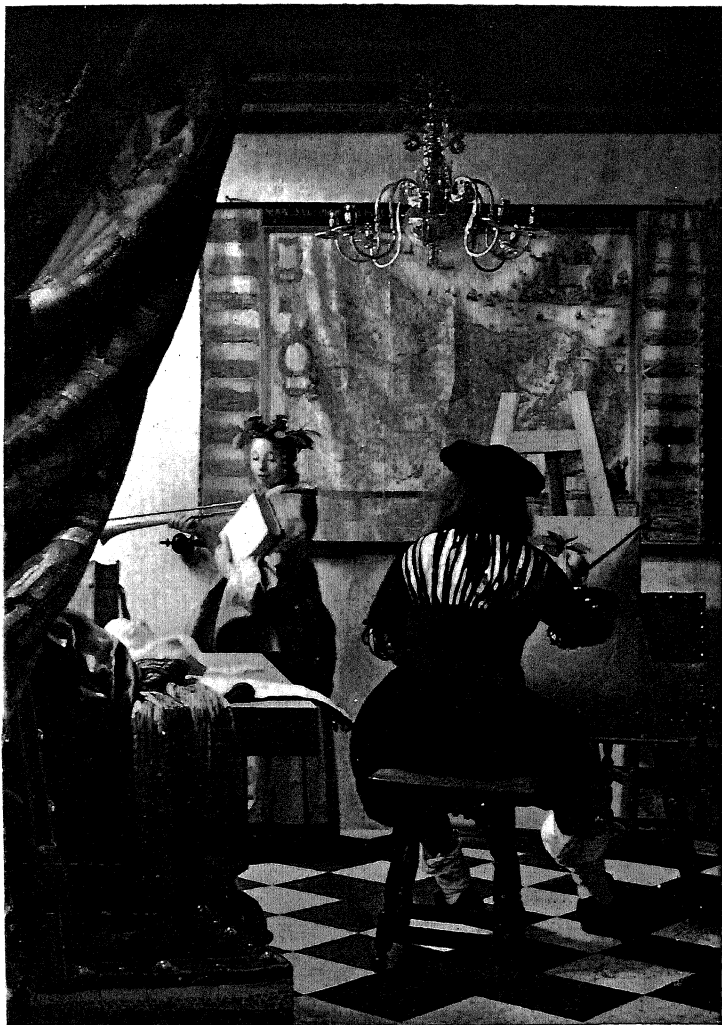
HE WONDERS IF DEPTH OF FEELING IS ESSENTIAL TO  
GREAT ART AND FALLS ASLEEP WONDERING

I FOUND my friend one afternoon at the beginning of his fourth week of inaction in a disconsolate mood.

"I'm troubled," he moaned, "I'm becoming a valetudinarian. I'm out of condition. Who can wonder? The beautiful world disregards me. Here I lie a castaway, wounded in body and soul, without a general and, I fear, without a heart. My body controls my mind—that's failure. The light tells me that the day is declining, and what have I done? Since noon I have been trying to paint a flower picture from those pretty blossoms that Faith gathered—flower painting, the last resort of the sorrowful. And I've been introspecting, lashing myself for my lack of real feeling. Man, I don't feel. That's why I'm miserable. I'm full of self-pity and shame. I'm descending to the grave with all my aspirations unrealised, I'm——"

"'The white moon is setting behind the white wave,  
And Time is setting with me, O!'"

I interposed, knowing that the way to restore my friend was to treat his mood as intelligently normal.



VERMEER OF DELFT IN HIS STUDIO  
Painted by himself. Czernin Gallery, Vienna



## Is Deep Feeling Essential?

"Do you think Burns really felt those lovely lines?" he cried with passion.

I gazed at him mild-eyed, and answered: "Burns felt the emotion delicately, reflectively, as you feel the return to London after a day on the hills; but Burns was a poet, and so in the alembic of his imagination a commonplace emotion became magical."

"Is there any question for which you have not an answer pat and balanced? Forgive me. I'm ruffled. It's that contentious subject of *Feeling in Art* that has been troubling me all day. Every great artist in words or in paint should feel deeply. But do they—do all? With some 'seeing' seems an adequate substitute for 'feeling.' It was vision not feeling that made the greatness of Velazquez and Vermeer. I, *moi qui vous parle*, can't feel. I never have felt. I have emotions—that's all. And my vision is ordinary, but it's not ugly like Salvator Rosa's. Why can't I feel? Why have I only sensations?"

"Think less about yourself, and then perhaps you may learn to feel. At any rate you can interpret the feelings of others. Isn't that the subject of your proposed papers on *The Art Sense*? Come, come, Laodicean, stir yourself, begin!"

"With whom shall I begin? With Fra Angelico, who wept when he was painting the agony of his Saviour; with Sassetta, sweet and holy interpreter of the Franciscan feeling, who understood the inner impulses of the Saint far better than Giotto; with



## Fourth Week

those children who were the Friends of God, the painter mystics of the Rhine Valley ; or with Dickens who splintered his nib in the paper with anger against the abuses he was exposing ? ”

“ If you won’t begin, oh, ‘ Do end, quoth I. ’ ”

He capped the quotation : “ I end with—‘ Love is all and Death is naught, quoth she. ’ ”

Then was there silence : then was Claude Williamson Shaw away in a rapture. It needed little to lift him to ecstasy, a snatch of verse, a bar of music, the young moon, a pretty face, a Hebrew prayer.

Very easily would he come to earth again. Having alighted, he remarked : “ The photographs upon the screen are certainly diversified—Blake, Velazquez, Vermeer of Delft, Rembrandt, Daumier, Watts, Antonello da Messina and Adriaen Van de Velde. They are chosen to illustrate the subject of Feeling in Art. Do not expect a reasoned thesis from me. I report what I know, or think I know—that’s all. I’m an empirical impressionist, not a logician. A man can prove anything if he ignores the exceptions, but the wanderers have a way of making themselves more important than those in the fold.

“ Consider those two marvellous portraits placed side by side : *Philip Old* by Velazquez in the National Gallery, and *A Young Girl* by Vermeer of Delft in The Hague. I don’t suppose you could find anywhere in the world of art two such characteristic and unapproachable interpretations of the satiety





PHILIP IV.

By Velasquez. National Gallery, London.



PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG GIRL

By Vermeer of Delft. Mauritshaus, The Hague.

## Is Deep Feeling Essential?

of middle age and the candour of fresh youth. Velazquez had been painting will-less weary Philip IV. for years, and now it seems almost as if he *willed* the bleared eyes, the rambling neck, and the pasty complexion to appear upon the canvas; willed rather than painted Philip; willed the contour of the face, losing the line, tightening it and letting it wander again; willed the weight of the head, making you feel that if you took it in your hands it would lie heavy. And the Girl by Vermeer! She has no past, no future; she is just plucked from life, as you pick a flower. But her freshness does not fade. She lives. The arrested moment, the innocence of eye, the tremble of the lip, the young, fair flesh, are done as if in one sitting, simply, finally, sudden as a song carolled by some happy wayfarer on a spring morning.

“Now how about my notion of the necessity of deep feeling in art. Do either of these portraits suggest deep feeling? Assuredly not! They show profound power of seeing, unique vision and—that makes the great artist—the technical power to express what the eyes see. When nature grants the two in unison, the adept hand and the initiate eye, she produces a Velazquez and a Vermeer, but not necessarily men of feeling. When nature bestows sensitive artistic antennæ, a Gallic way of seeing things, but with no manipulative power and a derivative vision, she produces a Claude Williamson Shaw.”

## Fourth Week

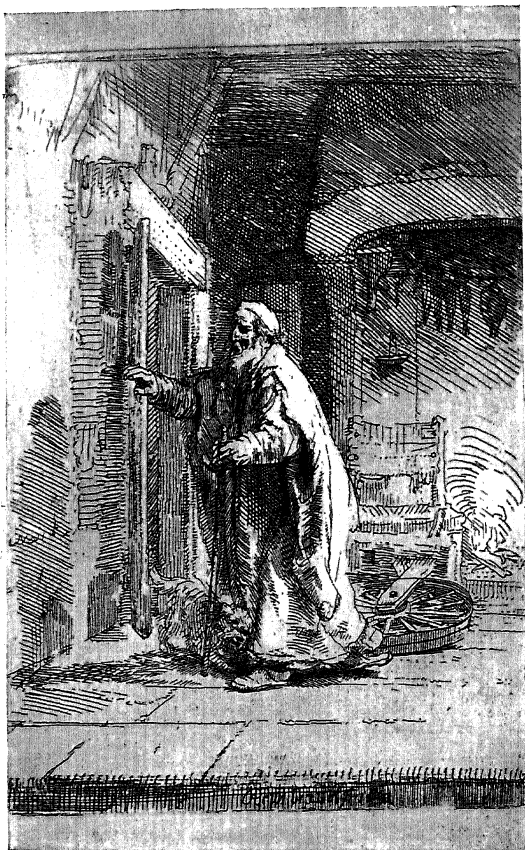
He paused. "I thought Faith and Honour were in the room," he said. "They always correct my modesty. They know me. Consider that well-expressed piece of self-depreciation unsaid. The literary mind is awful. Sometimes I catch myself trying to make my prayers literary."

He closed the parenthesis, paused, sighed, and resumed:

"Blake felt—felt incommunicable things. He was a great spiritual artist, but a poor material artist. The craftsman in him was but a facet of his heaven-intoxicated, esoteric soul. My friends are divisible into two classes, those who adore Blake, and those who resent him. I am one of his disciples. I admit that his drawing is odd, that he did not succeed in attaining his desire of 'clear colours unmuddied by oil,' and that his technique is sometimes odder than his drawing. But yet to speak only of his few extant paintings, frescoes, as he called them, they affect me, now with pity, now with horror, and always in a way that the works of many sincere men, infinitely greater craftsmen, as Sargent is greater than a Slade student, are powerless to do. To Blake feeling was stronger than living. His outward eye and the power of his hand were pigmies to that giant—his inner eye.

"I wonder what you think of his *Procession from Calvary*. No, don't answer me. I don't want to know what you think. Haven't you realised in all our years of acquaintance that I never require an





TOBIT BLIND

From the etching by Rembrandt in the British Museum

## Is Deep Feeling Essential ?

answer to a question. I ask it so that I may answer it myself.

“That *Procession from Calvary* is the real thing. Yes! I know that the figures are ten feet high, that the letter of the scene is not realised, as, say Dagnan-Bouveret would realise it, but the spirit is absolutely there. The restrained grief, the pathos, is as monumental as the design. That figure I imagine to be Nicodemus, walking by the side of the bier, is to me, for ever and ever, the embodiment of Nicodemus, as the tiny figure of Joseph of Arimathea supporting the body of Christ, in the middle panel of the predella of Filippino Lippi’s altar-picture in the National Gallery—is for me, for ever and ever, Joseph of Arimathea.

“Blake is really outside criticism. How can one appraise a human being, who, at the age of four, believed he had seen God ‘put his forehead to the window,’ who, as a feeble and tottering old man, protested that the imagination liveth eternally, and who proclaimed when near death, that in spirit and life he grew stronger and stronger ‘as the foolish body decays.’

“Goya peered into gulfs, Blake flung himself into them, soared up into the courts of heaven, and tried to tell us something of what his wild spiritual eyes saw.

“How sane, how strong, how reposeful is Michelangelo’s *The Eternal Creating Adam* contrasted with Blake’s version: one the sanity of genius, the other



## Fourth Week

the insanity of genius ; one the confidence of creation, the other the agony of creation.

“When I saw Michelangelo’s fresco in the Sistine Chapel, my soul soared to his calm thought. When I saw Blake’s agony of creation in the house of a friend, my soul cowered. Yet it drew me in the same moment. So insistent was the memory of the design that I couldn’t for the life of me remember anything about the colour. I wrote to the owner, an artist, and he answered, ‘The colour is mysteriously golden, golden in the great disk of the setting sun, golden in the wings of God, and the wings are crimson-flecked. For the rest, dim purples and shadowy blues, with the deep green of the lapping water.’

“Blake makes one feel overmuch, and it isn’t the kind of feeling that an invalid hankers after. What a man! He died, says one of his biographers, ‘Singing of the things he saw in heaven, and was buried in Bunhill Fields Cemetery.’ I like the unemotional method of such biographers. Yet that sentence expresses Blake—and life—celestial visions and then—then Bunhill Fields Cemetery staining the white radiance of eternity. Please give me a glass of raspberry vinegar. Thanks. \* \* \* Now I have left the heights. Now I am more in the mood to appreciate Jan Steen.

“Jan Steen ‘combined the business of a tavern keeper with the occupation of painting.’ That is another gem from a biographer. Steen saw. I do not think he often felt, and yet I am sure he felt the

## Is Deep Feeling Essential ?

homeliness, the partial ecstasy of the *Grace before Meat* scene, now in the National Gallery, the precise beauty of the mother's face, the rich blue of her skirt, and the blue of the suppliant child's frock. Strange it is that the Dutch painters nearly always please the eye, and, as Faith would say, rarely touch the heart."

"How about Rembrandt ?"

"Hush ! I am coming to him.

"In Rembrandt (towards the end of his life he wiped his brushes upon his trousers instead of upon a rag—I always think of that when I am disposed to be fanciful in my dress)—in Rembrandt's work is synthetised the floating feeling, sometimes anguish, sometimes æsthetic indulgence, of the modern world—longing, regret, aspiration, pity, grief, wonder. I doubt if anywhere there is any canvas so articulate with deep human feeling as Rembrandt's *Supper at Emmaus* in the Louvre. It needs no description: it ranges merely from amazement to ecstasy in the dim light of that high chamber luminous with mystery—pain, joy, wonder, faith—that's all. 'And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him.'

"Tell me, has blindness—petulant, forceful, not resigned blindness—as seen dumbly by those who have sight, ever been more poignantly expressed than in his *Tobit Blind* ? That small etching cries aloud with feeling. A master doesn't need a group of important people: he doesn't require the glory and glitter of a great sacred or historical event, he

## Fourth Week

can express everything if need be, with one figure. Watts, who devoted his life to allegorical paintings, never achieved his intention more completely than in his single figure, so restrained, called *For he had Great Possessions*. Abandoned now, in the bitter end, to grief and shame, once he had come running, had kneeled, and had said, 'Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' Yes, this is the arrested moment of feeling, the crisis of a life, the perfect realisation of that unforgettable comment, 'And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.' And I doubt if cruelty was ever more completely expressed than in Watts's figure of the Minotaur crushing the bird. There are some things in didactic art that are final, and among them are those three figures by Rembrandt and Watts representing blindness, remorse, and cruelty.

"As for Rembrandt's *The Three Crosses*, I am at a loss for words to analyse that scenic, heart-disturbing decorum in black and white. What dignity he has given to the central figure of this dramatic chaos. Faith won't look at this etching. She says it is too painful. Honour looks but is silent. She says it is one of those things that cannot be talked about.

"There is intensity of feeling and a ruddy beauty of colour in Ford Madox Brown's *Christ washing Peter's Feet*, and because it is not tragedy, because the onlookers show love and abashed absorption at this spectacle of love humiliating itself for love's



CHRIST MOCKED

From the picture by H. Daumier. Museum Folkwang,  
Hagen, Westphalia



## Is Deep Feeling Essential ?

sake, this is a comforting and a consolatory picture. I am not sure but that it is the best modern religious picture. Madox Brown took a possible episode, one germane to our humanity, and wrought it slowly, putting into it all he knew and felt."

"Did Antonello of Messina feel ?"

Chameleon Claude Williamson Shaw addressed this question to me with uncomfortable suddenness.

"Do you wish me to answer immediately, on the spur of the moment ?" I inquired.

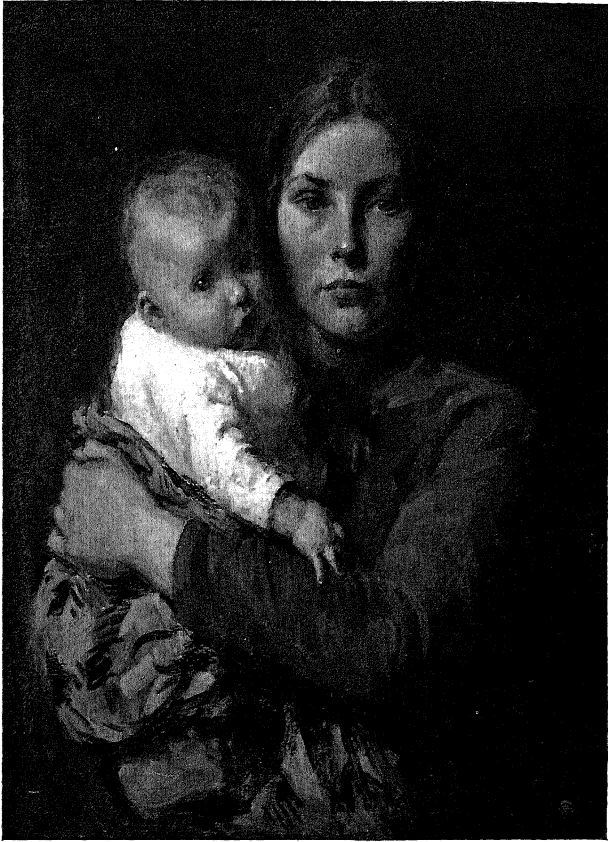
"No ; I want you merely to listen to my answer, helping me by your delightful power of silence to clear my mind for the section of *The Art Sense* I must write to-morrow on *Feeling in Art*. In the large room of the National Gallery, the room allocated (good word that) to the Venetian and Brescian schools there is a row of smallish works on the line, mainly by Giovanni Bellini, which form an extraordinarily beautiful sequence of pictures. Most of them are religious, but their effect is of beauty, not of piety. It's an amazing line of pictures. One of the advantages of talking about art, my friend, is that you can use superlatives. When I write my opinions I shall have to be more cautious. Sometimes I think of that line of beautiful pictures when I can't sleep. It's an entry to happy dreams of lovely colours, suave figures, sweet faces, and quiet skies.

"One of the items of that line of beauty is a *Crucifixion* by Antonello da Messina. You would

## Fourth Week

think that a crucifix, towering up the panel with a mound of skulls at the foot, and the mourning figures of the Virgin and St. John on either side, would be a picture poignantly sad and full of feeling; but it is not. Antonello did not feel the tragedy: he was in love with that milky white sky kindling to sapphire in the zenith, with the blue hills and the white buildings, and over all the sunny hush of nature. His eyes saw the beauty of the scene, but there was no echo of the tragedy in his heart.

“And nineteenth-century Daumier, whose influence on French art has been so great, what of him? Did fierce, good-natured Daumier, of the never-to-be-forgotten caricatures in the *Charivari*, creator of *Robert Macaire*, realiser of Cervantes’ dream, who made the *Third Class Carriage* immortal, did he feel all the awful indignity of his *Christ Mocked*? Assuredly, he felt the drama of it and the nobility that out-soars the pitiful scorn. The blurred central figure, in dignity, ranks with the central figure of Rembrandt’s *Three Crosses*. Life to Daumier was a pageant, a theme for caricature—biting, intense; and because the exaggeration of true caricature is nearer to life than the academic representation of life, his *Christ Mocked* is nearer to the brutality of that terrible episode than any picture within my knowledge. It is real: as we look at it the shame of the event is flung back to us. We feel it as if it is still happening, as it still is in the outraged hearts of some of us.



MOTHER AND CHILD

*Copyright, Detroit Publishing Co.*

From the picture by Gari Melchers





## Is Deep Feeling Essential?

“Daumier’s *Christ Mocked* is realism infused with imagination, and touched with caricature. That grave and beautiful *Mother and Child* by Gari Melchers is realism infused with ideality, which came uncalled into the picture; it was not sought, sincerity of feeling inspired the brush. This distinguished American painter, who is one of the forces in modern art, paints like Velazquez, like Manet, the object before him. The interior beauty of the mother’s face, the wide-eyed helpless wonder of the child, became imbued in the craftsmanship. The good workman worked, and out of his feeling there arose the ‘something more,’ and it passed into his theme, which is as old as art, yet ever new, and the picture was finished, and implied in it was more than craftsmanship—the understanding of rapt motherhood—sacred, human, eternal.

“See, in the twilight, what an air of mystery, of the primal simplicity of life, her face assumes. You feel in that *Mother and Child* something elemental, the pause of the present before the slow unrolling of futurity, all the potentialities of that wonderfully observed, wonderfully drawn baby.

“There is no mystery about Adriaen Van de Velde’s *Family Group* picture in the Amsterdam Museum. The future has been unrolled and has become cheerfully commonplace. It is a consoling picture, in the category of the books literary paragraphists call ‘bedside books.’ It is a ripe and calm picture of middle age, success, and contentment.

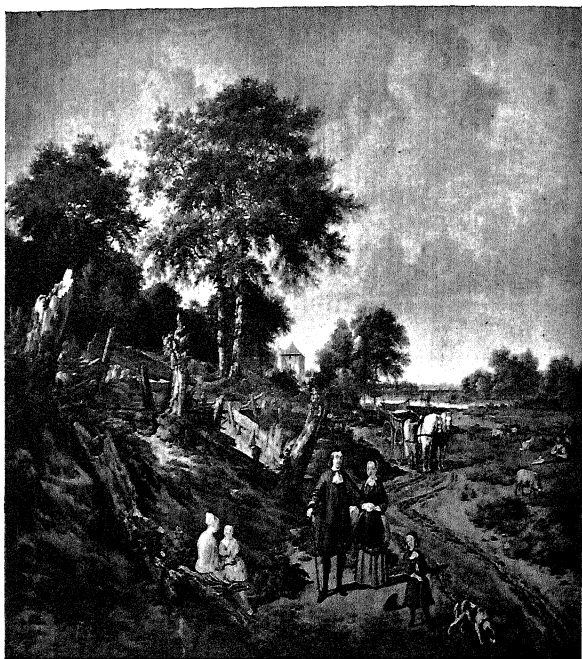
## Fourth Week

The artist, proud of himself, proud of his family, has driven into the country and is taking a gentle stroll to induce an appetite for supper. Contrast this equable Adriaen Van de Velde, who has made the most of the pleasant home-world, with Rembrandt, ever dissatisfied, artistically and spiritually, ever trying to soar on broken wing; contrast him with Blake who was never at rest, whose whole life was a struggle, inarticulate cries to a coy heaven for the unrealisable home of his desire. Happy Adriaen Van de Velde! Your quietness quietens me! Your picture is as gentle a soporific as the Bellini lovelinesses, upon whose sunny skies no night ever descends. Nor upon Antonello's blue hills.

"Yes! I know that Dr. Bode argues that the stately painter strolling with his wife is not a self-portrait at all, that the Dutch Mynheer represents a rich patrician whom Adriaen painted. I refuse to believe it. For me it will always be, as printed in the catalogue, as stated under the picture, a portrait of successful, contented Adriaen and his family—his masterpiece.

"I never ask myself if Adriaen Van de Velde felt. I just let him lead me into a land where it is always early evening, where the day's work is always done, and peace and rest have sealed the folded hours. I can just see, in the glimmering light, his serene features and the plain face of his admirable spouse. His hand clasps her elbow. God grant that I may some day reach such an anchorage in such a





THE ARTIST AND HIS FAMILY

*Hanfstaevel*

By Adriaen Van de Velde

## Is Deep Feeling Essential?

harbour. I think, if I had to choose between feeling and serenity for the rest of my life, I should choose serenity—perhaps, perhaps—the greater gift of spiritual se-ren-i-ty—the—greater—gift—— . . .”

I waited a few minutes, then drew the curtains, and tip-toed to the door, to find watchful Faith standing there with finger upon lips.

## FIFTH WEEK

HE DREAMS OF A PORTRAIT BY VINCENT VAN GOGH  
AND SOLACES HIMSELF WITH SOME OLD, QUIET  
MASTERS

I ENTERED my friend's room at an inauspicious moment. Indeed, had I not stood for an instant on the threshold, a heavy, dark red book that the patient had thrown angrily into the void would have bruised my astonished legs. Before I had time to protest, he had flung a companion volume with equal ardour to the other side of the bed.

"So much for Julius Meier-Graefe," he exclaimed. "That volcanic German excites me overmuch. Diabolically clever writing on revolutionary modern artists is injurious to invalids. I must have a sedative, say, Molinos the Quietist. No, give me Novalis, that little dun-coloured volume of extracts on the shelf. Ah! here is what I need. Listen: 'A work of art is a spiritual element. The artist stands on Man as a statue on its pedestal.' Novalis is a harbour of refuge after the stormy seas of Meier-Graefe. Contrast his repose with such a sentence as this from the masterful German's essay on Van Gogh: 'Van Gogh's was animal art. He seemed hardly to paint

## A Dream and a—Solace

his pictures, but rather to breathe them on the canvas panting and gasping.’

“That’s what I have been doing all night—panting and gasping. I fell asleep musing on spiritual serenity, and for some inexplicable reason I dreamed all night of Van Gogh’s self-portraits, that example in the Modern Museum at Amsterdam, wherein he looks like an ensanguined prize-fighter, and that screech of elementalism called *Portrait of the Artist with Flowers*.

“Van Gogh pursued me all night—Van Gogh, eager evangelist and frenzied artist, in whom the spirit of life boiled. He had the fury of creation; he regretted that life is created with less effort than art, and he lost his reason in his passionate desire to force seeing and painting beyond their limits. A sunstroke was the direct cause; he was prostrated while painting in the open under the scorching sun. The distracted man gave up the fight in agony and died by his own hand.”

“What an unedifying story,” I remarked. “No wonder that we in England prefer the gentler lives of Mr. Leader and Mr. Dicksee. Was this Vincent Van Gogh a genius, and when did he live?”

“He died in 1890; he was a Dutchman, and, strange to relate, was a pupil of Mauve’s. Herr Meier-Graefe (do pick the volumes off the floor; he’s too important a man to lie there) considers that Van Gogh is the most remarkable painter since the Old Masters.”



## Fifth Week

"May I open the window?" I interposed. "I wish to keep my head clear and my judgment sane."

"Pray do. We will shelve Van Gogh immediately. I am deeply interested in him because he was one of the parents of the Post-Impressionist movement of which Henri Matisse is the logical prodigy, and Cézanne, who died in 1898, the austere Master. Call their work sublime or anarchical as you choose, it is vital; it strives to say something; it makes me 'think,' as the late Archdeacon Farrar said of Hall Caine's *Christian*. They attempt to do in painting what Strauss is trying to express in music. These amazing men are not for me, just now, at any rate. They must wait till I'm well. I fall back gladly from the pursuit of their meaning into the aura of the quiet old men to whom a work of art was consolatory rather than stimulating. Did they, I wonder, realise it? Perhaps so. It was the great Michelangelo, was it not, who said, through the pure English of Wordsworth:

"The prayers I make will then be sweet indeed,  
If thou the spirit give by which I pray."

"Hark! I hear the steps of Faith and Honour. Hide the Van Gogh photograph, quickly. They hate his works. Faith has palpitations when she sees them; and when I took Honour to an exhibition of pictures, in the Rue Lafitte, by Gauguin, the child nearly fainted. Oh! art! art! Did you ever hear of Simon de Vos?"

I smiled inwardly, and said with my lips: "Be



*Hanfstäengl*

WILLEM VAN HEYTHUYSEN

From the picture by Frans Hals in the Liechtenstein Gallery, Vienna  
(see p. 60)



## A Dream and a—Solace

merciful to me when you write your book. Of course I haven't heard of all these fanciful folk you seem so concerned about."

"Simon de Vos, like Van Gogh, was a fanatic, but he was sane. Fanaticism, I suppose, is one of the finest things in the world when controlled, and when the impulse is engendered by something outside the individual. Van Gogh was a fanatic about expression. Simon de Vos was a fanatic about the poor. So I interpret Simon de Vos, the little I know about him. One of the few salient things recorded of this Dutch painter is Sir Joshua Reynolds's comment on Simon de Vos's portrait of himself: 'So highly finished in the broad manner of Correggio, that nothing can exceed it.' That strikes me as odd art criticism, but in art criticism the greatest or the least may say anything.

"Pin the self-portrait by Simon de Vos upon the screen. I love it. I love it all the more after the Van Gogh self-portrait. The Antwerp Gallery catalogue calls it 'a very pleasant, kind, almost funny face.' So it is. One is better for looking at Simon de Vos with the sunny smile, and better for reading the inscription on the portrait which says that he lived frugally, and that he gave to the poor of his earnings, even to half of his wealth, hoping that by this example others may do the same. And he asks you to pray God to have mercy upon his soul. I am sure that Faith and Honour, although good Anglicans, remember Simon de Vos in their prayers.

## Fifth Week

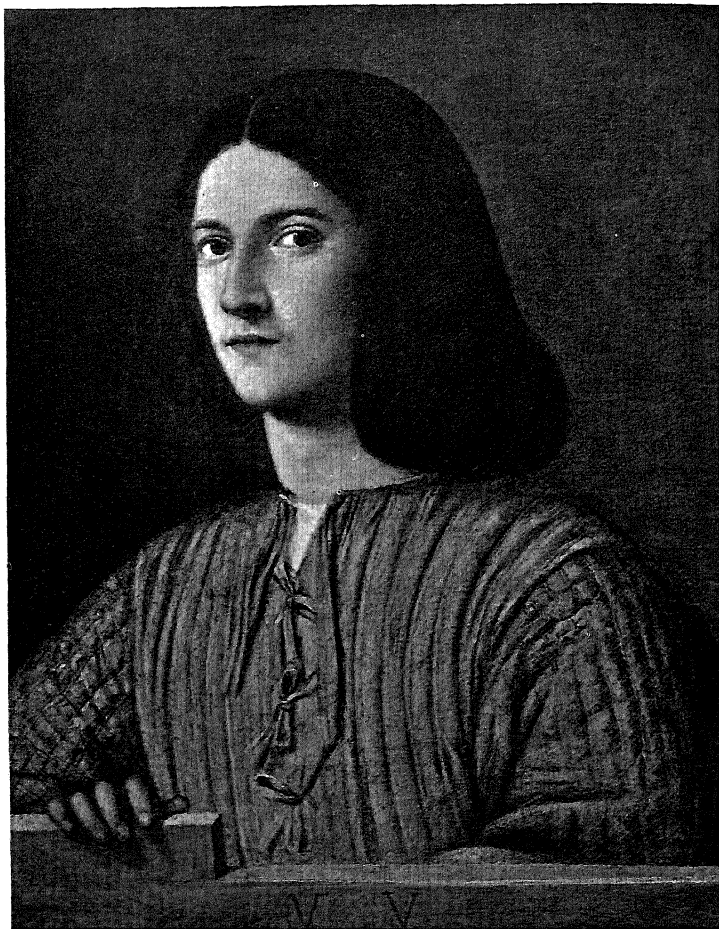
"Now, girls, affix all the photographs to the screen, beginning with the de Vos, and ending with the musical picture by Morto da Feltre, which we found at Hampton Court. So!

"Now you see what I mean by the old, quiet portraits. I don't believe that the men of old time troubled much about a likeness. The best of them were more concerned to suggest the soul of the sitter, or to produce a beautiful and decorative arrangement. In our individualistic times the artist is badgered to present a likeness. Sometimes the likeness and the 'something more,' that may be the immortal part of man, are combined with astonishing success, as in Sargent's *Coventry Patmore* and *Lord Wemyss*, in Shannon's *Phil May* (with the lasting smile) and *Fox-Hunting Squire*, and in Watts's *Walter Crane*.

"Now, if you please, drop back into the ages to grave and dignified Giovanni Bellini. One of my favourite books is *Conversations of James Northcote, R.A., with James Ward*. If only—if only there was a work as wise and intimate reporting Albert Dürer's conversations with Giovanni Bellini, based on their meetings at Venice in 1506. Ah! that would be a priceless volume.

"I believe that Giovanni Bellini, with his portraits of *Two Noble Venetians*, was the originator of that grave, suave, sexless kind of portraiture that Titian and Giorgione carried to perfection. Look at those two Venetian youths in their simple sumptuous





PORTRAIT OF A MAN

*Berlin Photographic Co.*

From the picture by Giorgione. Berlin

## A Dream and a—Solace

dresses. They affect me like elegiac poetry. Being dead they still speak to us through their splendour, like kings on carven tombs.

“And what do you think of the Giorgione *Portrait of a Man* at Berlin? Is not this bust of a Venetian placed against a parapet, with his hand resting upon the ledge, final in its reposeful beauty. Whenever I go to a picture gallery I try to carry away with me a salient impression of one remarkable work, as a sort of souvenir of the pictorial adventure. Last time I visited the Kaiser-Friederich Museum it was this Giorgione portrait that remained with me, unforgettable. I wrote down my impressions. Faith, give me the last Berlin note-book. Ah! here it is. I’m going to inflict upon you my commentary on this beautiful thing, in a frame of blue-painted scroll work, equally beautiful.

“He is one of those dreamy, poetical, full-eyed, questioning Italians that Giorgione loved to depict. This is not a portrait of repose; it is repose itself. Looking at him, you feel not only the body under the garment, not only the rounded skull under the long, thick, carefully-attired hair, but you are also conscious of the mind and the heart of him working under those calm, reflective features. It is the pinnacle of portrait-painting, it is man in the fruition of culture, it is ripeness, as if the artist was unconsciously echoing in paint Shakespeare’s great lines: ‘Men must endure their going hence, even as their coming hither: Ripeness is all.’



## Fifth Week

“And the colour is not laid on roughly, vigorously, defiantly, as in most modern work. It seems to be one of the integral intimacies of the picture, inherent in it like the sap of a tree or the perfume of a flower. The colour glows out from within, like the spiritual light from a transfigured face. We may note that the background is dark green, the hair shadowed, the flesh pale yellow, the thin quilted coat shot purple, but those are mere words and convey little. It is the whole that one judges by, the calm finality of the work, the exquisite, penetrating vision of the artist allied to a perfect technique; drawing, colour, mass, suffused one in the other, making this unknown man to glow with life and mute communications.

“What is the secret of the charm of this picture? It is not enough to say that Giorgione was a genius. That accounts for his insight, but not for his technique. This young genius lived in an age when a man was obliged to master his technique. What was that technique that took years to master? To begin with there was no hurry. Without haste, without rest, was the craftsman's implied motto. We read of eight or nine separate applications of pigment more or less solid; of the canvas, when the ‘laying-in’ process was finished, being placed in the sun and dew to dry, often for months; of repeated rubbings down and scrapings; of rich glazes and alternate scumblings, and the final coat of golden varnish. In a word, a picture went through processes that





ST. MATTHEW INSPIRED BY AN ANGEL

From the picture by Rembrandt in the Louvre

## A Dream and a—Solace

were as well understood, as orderly, as progressive as the making of a Chinese bowl.

“There is a vast difference between the portrait manner of Giorgione and that of Holbein the Younger, the difference between the splendour of Venice and the austerity of the lowlands of the north; but implicit in each is the same patient craftsmanship controlling genius. The Giorgione is idealism, the Holbein is realism, but reverent, modest, not shouting, modern realism. Sir George of Cornwall, with the gold in his hat, and the pink in his hand, stiff against a blue background—lives. Of his deeds I know nothing, but Cornish Sir George survives through Holbein’s eyes and craft. Seemingly of the moment too, this moment, is that grave, pale, unknown Spanish gentleman, one of the most human and haunting of all the portraits by Velazquez. How did he do it? I have sat for an hour before this Unknown at Apsley House studying the technique, and—and—well, there is a twirling impasto of paint upon the forehead, as if the brush loaded with pigment had been caught in an eddy: then it sweeps in a streak of light down the nose and finishes with a splash beneath the chin—and that tells nothing. I shrug my shoulders, mutter the word Velazquez, bow the knee, and try to write about the unwritable.

“You smile to see two more Rembrandts on the screen. I can’t keep Rembrandt out of the discussion. When I was last at the Louvre, suddenly, at the end of the long gallery where the Rembrandt

## Fifth Week

pictures are now gathered, I saw his *St. Matthew Inspired by an Angel*. Strange to say, I had never noticed it before. Velazquez could not have painted that inspiration of St. Matthew. I do not think the idea would have appealed to him. This is a picture of deep feeling. All Rembrandt felt so poignantly passes on to us. You remember what Millet said: 'Le fond de tout est toujours ceci: qu'il faut qu'un homme soit touché d'abord pour pouvoir toucher les autres.' Write it down, Faith! Translate it. I am the only person who understands my own French.

"There was no need for deep feeling when Rembrandt painted his old friend Burgomaster Six, descending the stairs, pulling on his gloves. Oh! those hands and gloves! Frans Hals might have signed them. Once, in a gay mood, I wrote a story, the idea of which was that jolly Frans Hals did paint those hands and gloves, surreptitiously, for a joke, to astonish Rembrandt.

"I suspect that Hals's portrait of *Willem Van Heythuysen* at Vienna, astonished that dandy. He could hardly have hoped to have his magnificence so magnificently expressed. What a glorious representation of exterior paraphernalia it is. Equally gorgeous, but in a subtler way, is Dürer's portrait of himself. Lurking, delicately insistent, behind the carefully crimped hair and the costly fur-lined robe, is the deep, reflective soul of Dürer himself, the man who from the mass of trivialities in his *Journal*,

## A Dream and a—Solace

flamed forth with that cry beginning, 'O God, is Luther dead?'

"Sometimes, in looking at pictures, I can hardly believe that their authors, or the men and women they painted, have passed beyond our voices. And sometimes the lesser men give that sense of life extending beyond life more completely than the greater Masters. That central figure in Giorgione's *Concert*, the full-eyed rapt man playing and listening, he lives, does he not? But look at the sly little lady in Morto da Feltre's *Concert*, who is more sensitive to the touch of the bearded musician's hand on her shoulder than to the music she is supposed to be reading. I see in her a sense of life, provocative, personal, that is almost uncanny. She is on a lower plane than Giorgione's people, but she is more tinglingly alive. I go to Hampton Court Palace, I make my way to Morto da Feltre's *Concert*, and that little lady, long, long ago dust, is more vivid to me than many of the living. She is quietly, persuasively alive; the men and women of Van Gogh and his school are stridently, clamorously living. I don't want to board with them any more than I want to share a lodging with Mr. Roosevelt. Yet, they hypnotise me."

After this long monologue Claude Williamson Shaw was silent for a few minutes. He seemed agitated. Presently he beckoned to me and whispered, "Get Faith and Honour out of the room. I have something to show you. They must not know."

## Fifth Week

His voice grew lower, tenser. "I've got a Van Gogh picture here. It's hidden under the bed in my hold-all. I bought it in Montmartre long ago for two hundred francs. The dealer didn't know it was a Van Gogh, because it was merely signed 'Vincent'; but that's the way he always signed."

\* \* \* \* \*

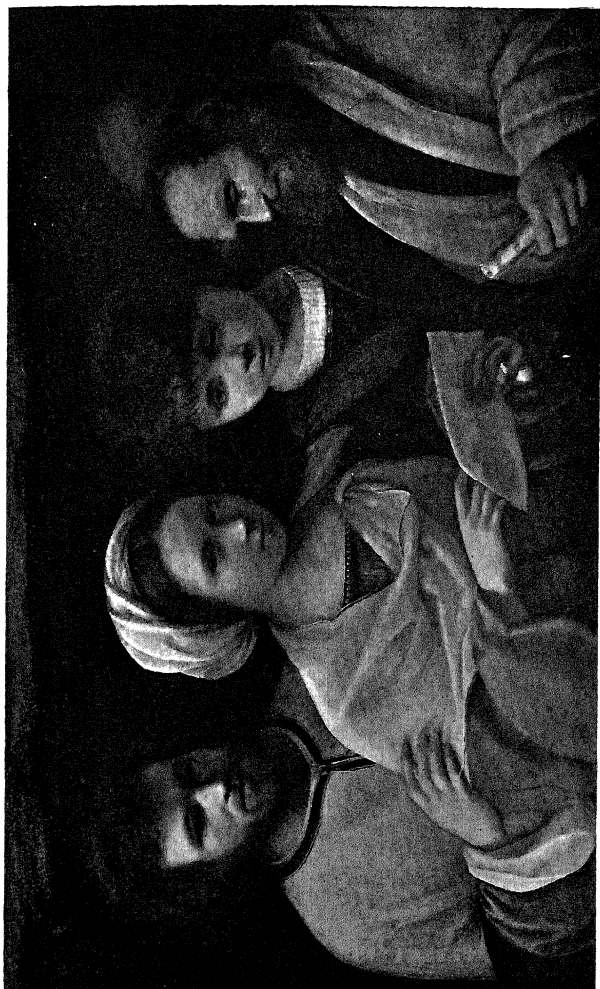
I gave him the hold-all. He opened it and showed me the Van Gogh.

"Well," he asked excitedly, "what do you think of it?"

"It's hideous and beautiful at the same time," I said.

Claude Williamson Shaw looked at the Van Gogh reflectively.

"Yes," he said, "most people either loathe it or love it. It's either hideously beautiful or beautifully hideous. I don't quite know which. Take it away. Hide it, for pity's sake, or I shall have another sleepless night."



A CONCERT

From the picture by Morro da Felire at Hampton Court





## SIXTH WEEK

HE RECALLS SOME PORTRAITS OF WOMEN AND  
CONTRASTS THOSE RELATED TO THEIR FROCKS  
WITH THOSE RELATED TO LIFE

THE birds awoke me at sunrise. In that mystical moment, so odd are the workings of the mind, an absurd question came to my lips and cut into the melody of the birds: "Did that Van Gogh portrait give my friend, Claude Williamson Shaw, a sleepless night?"

For the humour of answering it I crept on tiptoe to his room, and found that, whatever distracting dreams the dark hours had brought, he was now wide awake and cheerful. Have I explained that his injury was mending, and that he was able to leave his bed? He had hobbled to the window, had extemporised an easel with the help of a high-backed chair, and he had been painting a large water-colour, using the sponge freely. I caught a glimpse of the work before he threw it under the bed to the companionship of the hold-all containing the Van Gogh.

Said I: "How ridiculously self-conscious you amateurs are. Why should you not be making a

## Sixth Week

picture of a classical temple at sunrise : although, on the other hand, why should you ? ”

His back was to me. He was leaning from the window looking at the sunrise, and the room was full of the scent of flowers and the hush of morn. Presently he said :

“ I didn’t dream of the Van Gogh. Chance gave me something beautiful. Before I closed my eyes in sleep I saw the linen curtains fluttering—there was a little breeze, you remember, at midnight—and as they fluttered they made all manner of beautiful shapes, and I said to myself : ‘ Now they look like the drapery of the *Victory Tying her Sandal*. Then I went to sleep and dreamed of the Temple of the Wingless Victory at Athens, which has been rebuilt, but that doesn’t matter.

“ I had always thought that the most wonderful experience of my life was when I first stood upon the Acropolis on a spring morning. I seemed to have died, and I felt, as Martineau said, that death is but the partial operation of a higher law, and that my mind was finding in death its true nativity. But this morning, in this magical, electric dawn, that you see is already growing commonplace, the Temple of the Wingless Victory seemed in memory nearer to me, more intimate, than the Acropolis. I had the sudden desire to interpret it, as Brabazon interpreted Turner and Claude, with this English sunrise as a background ; so I hunted out a photograph of the Wingless Victory Temple and began a water-colour.



VICTORY TYING HER SANDAL

From the balustrade of the Temple of the Wingless Victory, Athens



## He Recalls Some Portraits of Women

But the mood has passed. Mundane life begins. Do you not hear the movement of the intensive culture labourers in the cottages. I wonder what the Greek women were really like. What sort of a look in the eyes, what kind of a smile had the model for this *Victory* when she had finished tying her sandal in the last quarter of the fifth century B.C. ? Did one man love 'the pilgrim soul in her, and love the sorrows of her changing face' ? Did he murmur, a little sadly, how love fled and—— ”

At this moment there was a gentle knock at the door, and Faith's voice said, "Claude, dear, you mustn't really talk until you've had something to eat. What would you like for breakfast ? ”

"A little tea and toast," he cried, and added, in a lower voice, "Yes ! the day has begun."

He ruminated a little, then lit a cigarette, and said, "Now to work, my indefatigable friend. I propose this week to decorate the screen with portraits of women, some of the less-known examples that take my fancy. I wish I had a photograph of that centuries old Chinese *Portrait of a Lady* that the British Museum people recently bought, a lady related to her frock, certainly, but a decorative work for all time, not for the Paquin-Worth moment, but for eternal moments, lasting as the raiment that the *Victory Tying her Sandal* wears.

"Headless and armless now, once she hung poised in her perfect beauty on one of the marble slabs forming the balustrade that surrounded the platform

## Sixth Week

of the Temple of the Wingless Victory, that sister of the clouds, looking down upon Athens. The learned complain that the sculptor's attention was directed more to the beautiful drapery than to the human form beneath. And why not? I am all for the symbol and the type, not for the neurotic reality of the individual; for the idea of femininity, not femininity itself; women as Watteau painted them, not for any particular woman; for this passionless *Victory*, not for a nervy bundle of uncatalogued desires such as existed in Athens in the time of Pericles, as in London in the reign of George V."

"Nonsense," I interjected, "that is merely the literary dreamer speaking in you, uttering the pretty phantasies that you derive from your true ancestor, Laurence Sterne, that master of gossamer sentiment. The man in you, when he comes up against the woman of his choice, in art or in life, is human, not literary. Look at that photograph on the screen of *Miss Singleton* by Gainsborough, now in the National Gallery. She is a particular woman, a typical Gainsborough statement of essential femininity, eternally personal, eternally charming."

"Yes, she is rather nice, and her clothes don't bother me, as do frocks in portraits by Gandara and Boldini. I can never tell one Gandara or Boldini woman from another. They are related to nothing but the *modiste* who made their clothes. Gainsborough, probably with the unconsciousness of genius, always carried into practice the golden counsel of







*Alinari*

DETAIL FROM THE FRESCO "THE BIRTH OF ST. JOHN"

By Ghirlandaio, in Santa Maria Novella, Florence

## He Recalls Some Portraits of Women

that wooden painter, Hudson: 'Think of your figure as the candlestick and candle, and let the head be the flame.' Ah, I guess there was some truth in that remark of Hoppner's, that it was the ambition of Gainsborough to represent the body, and of Reynolds to represent the mind. Gainsborough's exquisite *Perdita* is but pretty flesh, and he has achieved only the fading, flower-like delicacy of *Miss Singleton*.

"Modern portraits of women are so startlingly personal. Sisters, sweethearts, dowagers, and the wives of successful merchants, are not content with a beautiful decorative picture; they will have the likeness. Some of our portrait-painters grow distracted trying to please the family with the likeness. In the old days sitters were not so exacting. Why, Hoppner boasted that he used first to make a face as beautiful as he could: then he would give it a resemblance to the sitter, and when the family said; 'The likeness is coming,' he would stop and never venture 'to make it more like.'

"Yet I must believe that the plain, haunting portrait of a young woman by Petrus Christus at Berlin was really like this lady of the Talbot family; how reticent it is; and how it conveys the idea of the existence of that little sullen face pouting prettily some time in the fifteenth century. It has hardly any colour—a touch of gold in the head-dress trimming, of blue in the coat, and the background is light brown at the top and dark below.

## Sixth Week

Petrus Christus who was a member of the Confraternity of the Dry Tree, and who was said to have been a pupil of one of the Van Eycks, did not worry the paint; and I am sure that the family of this pretty, plain young woman did not worry him about the likeness. The candlestick of her body is clothed neatly and with propriety, and if her face does not flame, it certainly reflects the quiet integrity of Petrus Christus.

“That Florentine lady in Ghirlandaio’s fresco at Florence seems to be all pale flame. The high-bred face crowned with the braided hair, and the white and gold of her stately dress are one. Little interest does this young and gracious girl, this symbol of the Florentine joy in the beauty of life, take in the scene in that chamber, nothing less than the birth of St. John Baptist, into which she has quietly intruded with her tire-women. Cool, quiet, detached, she stands in Ghirlandaio’s peeling fresco, related to what?—only to her assured self, a lovely record of a day when women of her class, having their rights so abundantly, never dreamed of stooping to clamour for what they already had.

“Beauty, I suppose, has never thought about its rights, any more than the rose thinks about its perfume; but a second-rate painter, try as he will, cannot suggest beauty which has already been extolled and made evident by the sister art of literature. The memoirs of the period are radiant with the charm and loveliness of Frances Stewart, who became

## He Recalls Some Portraits of Women

Duchess of Richmond; but, tell me, did second-rate Lely triumph as second-rate Ghirlandaio triumphed? No! His portrait of Frances Stewart with 'all her hair about her ears' is the best of Lely's Windsor Beauties at Hampton Court, and as she conforms to a type I suppose I ought to like her, but I don't. Lely's was a tradesman's vision, and I am titillated more by that poem (Pope's, wasn't it?) referring to these languishing ladies with the 'sleepy eye that spoke the melting soul,' and their 'nightgowns fastened with a single pin,' than by Lely's rendering of the chief of the Windsor beauties. Upon my word, I prefer the women of Frans Hals. What is art? Why, when I visit the Louvre, should that plain-featured *Huismoeder* by Hals affect me, stimulate me, gladden me more than the lovely lady by Lely at Hampton Court? These are mysteries. Yet, is there a mystery? One is great art, the other is meretricious art—that's all.

"Beauty in a sitter is really of small moment to an artist. It's beauty of paint that tells, and the character that he evokes on his canvas. That wise painter, W. H. Hunt, quoted by that consummate artist, the Belgian Alfred Stevens, said: 'Half the beautiful pictures in the world are painted from people who are not beautiful.'

"I don't suppose anybody would call the woman in Bastien Lepage's *Haymakers* beautiful, but what a wonderful and beautiful picture it is! You don't know it?"

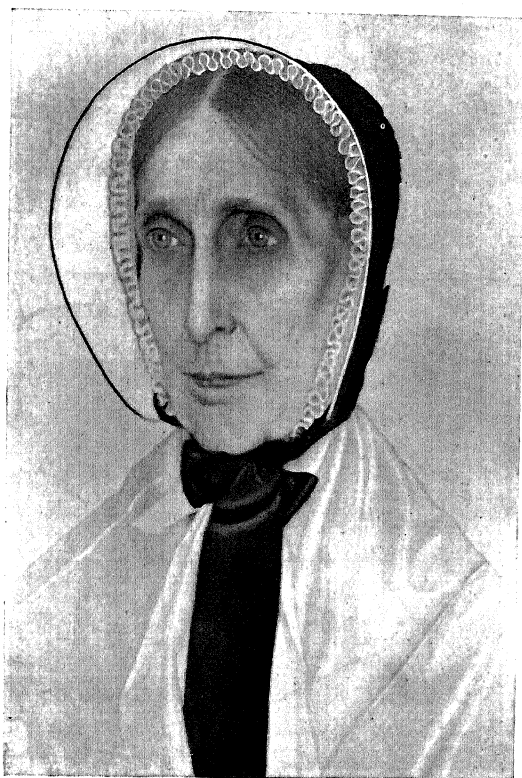
## Sixth Week

He tried to limp to the case of photographs, but I persuaded him to return to bed, and then at his request withdrew from the drawer labelled B the photograph of Bastien's *Les Foins*.

He examined it eagerly.

"Just look at that lovely landscape at the top, and the drawing of the sleeping man's figure, and the rapt regret expressed on that black-eyed peasant girl's face. My word! What a draughtsman he was, what an artist! Now give me, by way of contrast, from the S drawer the photograph of *The Present*, by Belgian Alfred Stevens. Isn't she delicately and delightfully and daintily 'seen.' Which do you like the better, the worker as interpreted by French Bastien, or the player by Belgian Stevens? Each is something more than a mere portrait; each is related, in a subtle way, to life. So is the portrait of *Mrs. Collmann* by English Alfred Stevens, that all-round genius in the arts, who is at last being fully recognised. His *Mrs. Collmann* is more than a mere portrait: she is a type of the Early Victorian woman, sweet, sane, simple, and, may I say, just a little self-satisfied?

"The subject doesn't matter to a painter; the vital thing is how he sees it. I've said that before, I think, but writers have a way of repeating what they believe to be the truth. It's how he sees his subject, whether it be ugliness or beauty, a Velazquez dwarf or a Gainsborough lady; depravity or wisdom, Manet's *Absinthe Drinker*, or Bellini's *Doge*; mistress



A QUAKER LADY

From the drawing by Joseph E. Southall



## He Recalls Some Portraits of Women

or maid, the intensive breeding of Sargent's *Mrs. Langman*, or Shannon's *Flower Girl*, one of the treasures of the Tate Gallery, homely life transfigured in imprisoned sunshine. The subject matters little. And age can be even more beautiful than youth. Much as I like the luscious lips and auburn hair of that little early Millais called *The Bridesmaid*, pre-Raphaelite Millais, the unequalled, there is something in the face of the *Quaker Lady*, drawn by Joseph Southall when she was eighty-seven that—well, look at it ! ”

Claude held up the photograph and murmured :

“ ‘He openeth deep things of the Spirit to them that love Him.’ But life wasn't all the primrose way to this dame who has conquered. The eyes are in heaven, but the lips still bear witness to the ardour of the fight, now over, peace with honour ; the good soul has gone to her rest, her years, when she died being ninety-three. Contrast the *Bridesmaid's* full rich lips with the thin firm lips of this *Quaker Lady*. There you have life in little or in large, which you will, interpreted for us by two artists.

“Strange it is how some works of art stimulate and others merely bore. I remember an exhibition of modern portraits of women, over two hundred of them—a few superb, many very clever, and a number mere successful efforts to minister to the vanity of the sitters, to make them look more beautiful than they really were, and their clothes



## Sixth Week

more wonderful, more 'in the movement' than they could really afford. These portraits bored me, that is the only word—bored me; and as I wandered through the rooms, I was conscious of the apprehensive, numbing fear, that I was ceasing to feel, that life (and art, which is part of life) was emptying itself of joy. But we never know when our periods of rhythmic delight are on the backward wing. As I walked through those rooms, suddenly, in an unimportant place, I saw a modest, coloured lithograph by Spenser Pryse, and all my joy came back. Why? Because I seemed to touch humanity again, not the smirking, satisfied, self-centred life of the individual, but the little life of the individual related to all the great mystery and wonder and beauty of the world.

“‘Thoughts hardly to be packed  
Into a narrow act,  
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;  
All I could never be  
All, men ignored in me,  
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher  
shaped.’”

“This woman stands there looking out over the silent sleeping world. It is her soul we see, the body is merely an episode. I follow her dream, and with her I go into that land of dreams beyond the horizon, where self passes trembling, with a wrench, into infinity.

“‘Love took up——’”

Claude Williamson Shaw, as you may divine, was about to quote Tennyson, and I should not have





THE CITY OF SLEEP

From a coloured lithograph by Spencer Pryse

## He Recalls Some Portraits of Women

interposed, for I love the derivative poet in him ; but at that moment there was another knock at the door, and we heard the voice of Honour saying :

“ Claude, dear, Faith is coming upstairs with a nice bloater and some of your favourite Oxford marmalade. You’ll be good, won’t you, and eat as much as ever you can. Oh, and Claude, you’ll find the Dioxogen in the little cupboard above the mantelpiece.”

Claude Williamson Shaw sighed, smiled, and whispered :

“ It cannot always be dawn, with the twitter of birds, the light in the sky, and the thought of the *Wingless Victory*. Inevitable eight o’clock comes with bloater and marmalade.”

The he added aloud :

“ Honour, you’re an angel ! I’m ready for breakfast this minute, and ravenous.”

## SEVENTH WEEK

HE GLANCES AT THE MODERN MOVEMENT IN ART,  
BECOMES MUCH INTERESTED, AND RATHER GIDDY

“THERE are two ways of writing the bewildering story of modern art,” said Claude Williamson Shaw. “You may begin at the beginning, say the year 1850, or you may leap forth from the present moment and work backwards. Either way is arduously complex unless you take only the leaders, and neglect all the followers. Personally, I should find it more amusing to begin with the topmost branches of the Tree of Modern Art, and to travel down to the roots, to the giants who have had the greatest influence on the modern movement. The huge roots of my Art Tree would be labelled Velazquez, Rubens, Van Dyck, Turner, Constable.

“I shall have to make a drawing of my Art Tree with many branches—great, medium, and little—various twigs and gigantic exposed roots. It will begin to grow about the year 1850, and every vital modern artist will have his branch or twig deriving direction from some parent stem; and all the rest, everything that matters, from nature. Turner is the great exemplar. He learnt from his forbears

## The Modern Movement in Art

and contemporaries, and when he had absorbed all they had to teach, he went straight to the parent of all—nature. Watteau is another. His influences were Rubens and Teniers, but he lives, because the day came—well he knew it!—when the only thing for him was the look of his own eyes, and the exploration of his own temperament. Watteau was a prodigy. A modern born more than a century and a half before the modern movement.”

“You can put me down as a subscriber to your Art Tree.”

“Thanks. The difficulty will be the exclusions. Names crowd the branches and the roots. I could prove to you that pointellism began with Vermeer or even with Baldovinetti, and there are drawings by Claude in the British Museum that entitle him to be called the Father of Impressionism.

“Modern art is the cult of the individual, the Ego’s expression of personal vision. Through the ages almost all painters have had their capering moods, when they frolicked in paint or line from sheer joy of expressing their vision and exercising their craft. In the good old sober days they kept their pranks in the studio, now they exhibit them; that is the difference. Such exhibitions as the Salon des Indépendents, the Salon d’Automne, and the lively little shows at Cassirer’s in Berlin would have been impossible before the late nineteenth century.

“Most of the new men really try to find new, more

## Seventh Week

vital, and more essential methods of expression in art. The difficulty is to dissociate the leaders from the troop of catch-the-eye-at-any-cost followers. Nobody who has really studied their work doubted the high seriousness of Cézanne, Van Gogh, and Gauguin; nobody who is familiar with the performances of Maurice Denis, Serusier, Vlaminck, Derain, to name but four, doubts their integrity; and nobody who has studied the paintings of Henri Matisse, and has read the essay by him explaining his art, has the slightest doubt of his seriousness. Do you know his works? Ninety-five out of a hundred laugh when they see them. Five think. Do you know the 'cube' paintings of Picasso, and the improvisations of Wassily Kandinsky? Pause before you embark on that voyage. You will find yourself without a chart, without a compass. 'There is no canon,' say these protagonists. 'To understand us you must break through your conventional ideas of beauty.'

"Perhaps in a hundred years' time their work will be called academic. Manet's *Olympia* is now in the Louvre. Just think what that means! A brief fifty years, and the most revolutionary of pictures, derided, rejected, reposes unchallenged in the Louvre. Turner's water-colours, Constable's sketches, Stevens' drawings, Manet, Monet, Degas, Renoir, Whistler, the Pre-Raphaelites, honoured, fought for at auctions, no gentleman's collection complete without them. The Barbizon painters and the later Dutchmen all

## The Modern Movement in Art

in the fold—Van Gogh in national keeping at Amsterdam; Van Rysselberghe in a place of honour at Weimar; London and Brighton giving hospitality to Cézanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Denis, Vallotton, Matisse, and Vlaminck; our Albert Hall, home of oratorios, hanging, without a tremor, Wassily Kandinsky, Mousha Bastian, and Vincent Irolli; and Augustus John consenting to decorate the entrance-hall of the new Johannesburg Art Gallery. What times! What times!”

He hobbled up and down the room, laughing aloud at every step.

“You seem to find it rather entertaining,” I remarked.

“It depends upon the mood. Sometimes I am an ironist, sometimes a sentimentalist, sometimes a son of joy, sometimes a ‘sublimely elementalist,’ sometimes a bear, sometimes a mere invalid.”

He threw himself upon the bed, grabbed a morning paper that one of the girls had folded carefully and marked, flourished it and cried:

“Here is the kind of thing that gives me joy—a sentence in an article by a Member of Parliament. He calls Rodin’s statue of St. John the Baptist at South Kensington, ‘one of the half a dozen immortal achievements of our time, a glory for us all.’ That’s good! I like outrageous praise. When you get a man like Rodin, who in sculpture is the great force of our day, as Sargent is in painting, each disastrous to imitators, you can run to the extreme limit of



## Seventh Week

praise. Certain of Rodin's things positively excite me. His *Balzac*, for example. How mad I was when some French committee refused to accept that epoch-making monument for the City of Paris. What did they want? A Balzac in coat and trousers, the mere externals of the man? Rodin gave them an undying symbol of that creative force called Balzac, a massive figure in labour chained to the earth but aspiring, a rough-hewn suggestion, manlike yet godlike, of the homunculus who created the Human Comedy. The clinging robe he used to wear when creating seems the only possible garment for him. It is big and simple, like the massive throat, the leonine locks, and the deep look of his deep eyes. What an artist he is—this Rodin! Who else could have expressed plastically the artist's agonised joy of creation as he has in *The Sculptor's Soul*? Of course, it is rough, unfinished—such a subject must be embryonic, but how it sets the imagination working! See the craftsman's great hands ready to mould the clay, their purpose distracted and deified by the visible soul, half born, nearly articulate, insistent, whispering pain and ecstasy. This *Sculptor's Soul* is essential Rodin. It haunts me. Something catches in my throat when I think of it.

“Ah! you don't like it! You are one of those who think that *The Sculptor's Soul* goes beyond the limits of the art. You would dictate a frontier line to art and personality. Well, well! Your eyes

## The Modern Movement in Art

wander to the other photographs on the screen. You find them rather mixed—very modern. Your gaze rests gladly on *Teasing the Donkey*. Name the artist."

He gave me three guesses. I failed abjectly. He called Faith and Honour into the room. One suggested F. C. Gould, the other Raven Hill. (They read *Punch* and the *Saturday Westminster* seriously each week.) Claude laughed aloud.

"It is by the author of *Ulysses deriding Polyphemus*," he said.

"Turner?"

"Yes! Turner! You will find it in one of his sketch-books in the National Gallery, those extraordinary sketch-books that extend from his boyhood to his old age, wherein he noted down things seen, impressions, data, for his exhibited pictures. The *Teasing the Donkey* and the *Men Chatting round Fireplace* were done at Petworth in 1830, when he was fifty-five. Just look at the fireplace group, one of many such impressions of colour and form Turner saw in the first swift glance. Every artist is an impressionist at home—in secret. Why, that group around a fireside is modern enough to hang at an exhibition of the Society of Twelve. Turner did such things for his own delight; he never dreamed of exhibiting them. For his own delight, too, he flushed on canvas the 'unfinished' oils that were first shown at the Tate in 1906, and many of the other beginnings that are now enshrined in

## Seventh Week

the new Turner Gallery. I say of him as I say of Rodin—What a marvellous man! The Turnerian root in my Tree of Modern Art will loom beyond the page.”

While my enthusiastic friend was talking I was regarding with some curiosity the next two photographs upon the screen, a disquieting portrait of a man, and a reposeful interior. I made the obvious remark that the ladies, Faith and Honour, would dislike the one and love the other.

Claude laughed again.

“Two of our moderns,” he cried, “in amusing propinquity—Matisse, the Frenchman, and Hammershøi, the Dane. Everybody loves the works of Hammershøi. I mean by ‘everybody’ the few who have seen them. I suppose his parent-root is Vermeer of Delft—Vermeer diluted. Hammershøi loves bare spaces where light lingers; grey, empty rooms with severe furniture, in which he delights to place one figure in perfect harmony with the environment. Hammershøi is content with things as they are in the orderly rooms and byways of his northern capital. He is in harmony with the world of his choice. Matisse is a recluse in revolt, a red radical whose aim is not to overturn pomps and principalities, but to escape from them. He discards traditions, accretions, and conventions, and seeks the elemental. He paints, seemingly, as a child might have painted in the dawn of art, seeing only the essentials in form and colour, seeing, every-



BALZAC

By Auguste Rodin



## The Modern Movement in Art

thing in the round and stating his version with child-like fervour. Live with his strange, staring, smeary, streaky paintings for a week, and something passes from them to you, when you have overcome the first distaste, something enduring that will remain. They are, in their rhythmic way, life communicating. That *Head* of himself, painted by himself, the colour of it looking, at first glance, as if pure pigments had been smeared on the canvas arbitrarily, by a child's finger, has for me a radium-like vitality—inexhaustible. Mere words cannot describe the art of Henri Matisse. You must see it—in the bulk."

"Where?" I gasped.

"Is he a greater painter than Raphael?" asked Faith.

"No! No! No!" shouted Claude. "He's different. Do try to get away from comparing and contrasting things that are fundamentally alien. You 'don't say an orchid is better or worse than a zebra. They're different—that's all."

"So you want to know where you can see Matisse in all his outrageous, disturbing glory? There's a large white room in Paris, in a private house, hung almost entirely with paintings by Matisse. Students, disciples, and dilettanti gather there on Saturday evenings. Strangers come. The many are indignant; the few begin by being uneasy and end in fetters.

"Upon my word it's almost laughable how soon the eyes grow accustomed to strangeness—how

## Seventh Week

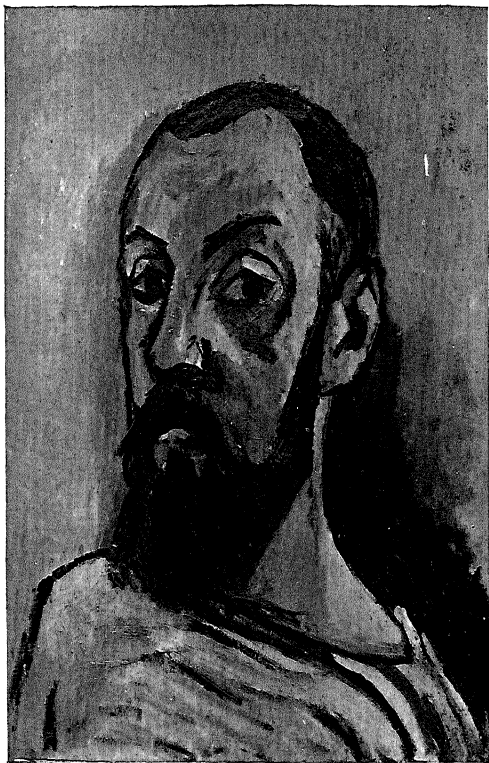
quickly a novelty becomes normal. Look at that picture by Degas of the Dancer now in the Luxembourg; what miraculous drawing, what a sense of light and movement! It is already a classic; it would create a flutter of excitement in the auction room. That group of brilliant Frenchmen who gathered in the café in Batignolles, immortalised in Fantin-Latour's *Un Atelier aux Batignolles*, are all classics. Even Bazille, who was killed in the war with Germany at the age of twenty-eight, has been dragged into the light of a one-man show. And Monet? He is an old master while still living. London, of course, has no example from his brush, but the Dublin Municipal Gallery, which shares with Johannesburg the distinction of having the finest collection of modern art in any English-speaking city, owns his *Waterloo Bridge*. These two galleries owe their existence to the genius and initiative of one man—Sir Hugh Lane. The parent-root of Monet is Turner—Monet, the sparkling, the vivid, who, after the sunshine of Givernay, found a new and restful vision in our grey London."

At this point Faith, who had quietly left the room while her brother was expatiating upon Matisse, returned with a cup of beef-tea. "Talking is so tiring, dear," she said.

"Yes," said Claude, "but I wish writing were as easy as talking. Do you know, I'm longing to paint again? I'm getting well, you see, mentally as well as physically. Art is turning from its consolatory







HENRI MATISSE

*Druck*

By Himself. Stein Collection, Paris

## The Modern Movement in Art

side, and fronting me with its stimulating ego. Look through the window at the hills against the Jacob Maris sky, the many greens in the foreground, and the spots of cows. I want to paint just what I see, not what Monet or Mancini or anybody else sees. Mancini! He's an original, and he uses paint as if it were a solid. He floods himself in externals, as in his gold and scarlet *Swiss Guard at the Vatican*—that has gone to Johannesburg—to him the man is nothing—the dress and office everything. I won't contrast this *Swiss Guard* with Rodin's *Balzac*, but will merely say that one is a portrait of the body, the other of the soul. And what of Mrs. Swynnerton's *On the Terrace*? Her paint is almost as thickly loaded as Mancini's, but she has more reverence for her medium. Although the personality of the sitter is frankly expressed, our eyes are enchained by the gorgeousness of the dress and the splendour of the setting. It would not be easy to explain to the residents of Johannesburg, some of whom have never seen a picture in their lives, why the Swynnerton and the Hammershøj are both good pictures. The only way would be to say that, technical accomplishment granted, the sole standard in art is the quality of the revelation of personality. But then one would have to explain personality. I must try to do that when I write my articles on *The Art Sense*—try, mind you!

“I have kept the two landscapes of the mountains and the sea to the last—Winslow Homer's *Cannon*

## Seventh Week

*Rock* and Sargent's *Brenner Glacier*: the Homer, a vast solemn mood of nature, painted broadly and simply, a sight that he must have absorbed through long years in his far distant lonely home on the coast of Maine; the Sargent, a wonderful, photographic vision, expressed with miraculous skill, of man's litter in the vastness of nature."

Claude Williamson Shaw walked to the further end of the room and frowned at the photographs upon the screen. "Modern art!" he exclaimed. "Very interesting, but it makes me a little giddy. Look at the pictures carefully, and tell me which of them arrests you, which of them seems to have that quality which we call vital or life-communicating? Which stands out?"

I studied them and at last murmured, "The *Balzac* and the—yes, the Matisse *Head*."

"I agree," he said, and chuckled.

## EIGHTH WEEK

HE RECOVERS, IS FASCINATED BY A CERTAIN MODERN DEVELOPMENT IN LANDSCAPE PAINTING, AND IS WILD TO PAINT AGAIN

ONE morning at the beginning of the eighth week I found Claude Williamson Shaw's room empty. It was 7 A.M., and a bright, still day.

"The wounded critic is sound again," I soliloquised. "Has he resumed his intensive culture studies, or is he picking flowers with the dew on them for his devoted sisters?"

Clearly he had been early at work, as the screen was crowded with a number of photographs of landscapes, a very personal choice, and (I smiled) at the foot of the screen was a scrap of paper scrawled with these words:

"You will find me at the windmill."

There I found him, seated on the steps of the mill, the latest make of "handy" paint-box upon his knees, completing a queer little geometrical landscape of the rolling Down country on a panel affixed to the inner lid of his paint-box. Lying on the grass was a book, a French book, open at a page containing four thumbed illustrations wet with dew.

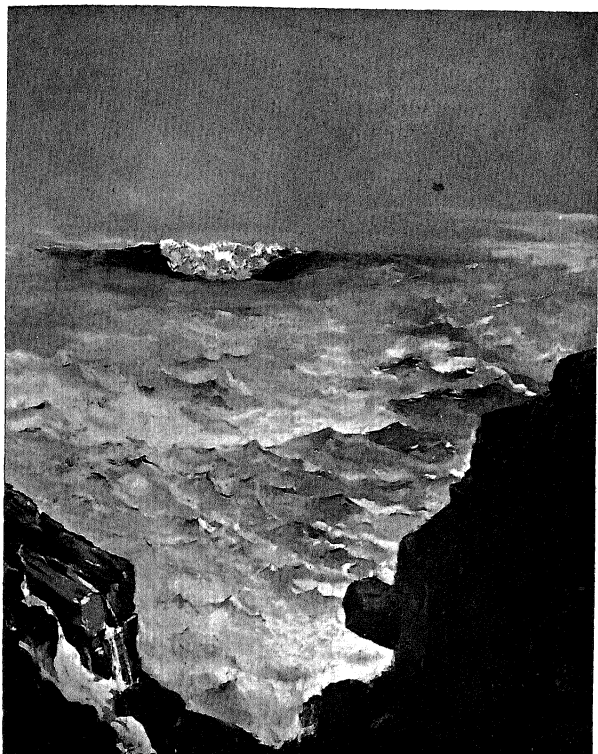
## Eighth Week

Claude was always careless about books. I looked at the pictures curiously. They were titled *La Montagne*, *La Ville*, *La Mer*, and *La Lande*, and the name of the artist was Charles Lacoste.

"Are you, Painter Unknown, making an interpretation of Lacoste in the manner of Brabazon?" I asked.

He sprang to his feet, clutched my arm, and cried:

"If, Author Unknown, in the years to come anybody asks you if you have ever known a perfectly happy man, say 'Yes: Claude Williamson Shaw was perfectly happy for two hours on a June morning painting a derivative picture, thinking, in the white heat of work, that it was all his own creation.' Regarding it now, critically, I know that it does not express the look of my own eyes, and the feel of my own heart: it is merely a pretty bastard thing. The atmosphere, the tone, are James Maris's, the design is cribbed from calm, intellectual Charles Lacoste. But—wait and see! The longing to paint is attacking me again. It will dominate me. And some day I will be myself. Look at the big line of the hills, the rolling pattern of the Downs, the atmosphere of that lonely, nestling farm, and that long line of cattle, decorative as a Breughel, wandering alone the vast slope. What colour! Not God in gardens? Not colour on the Downs? I wonder if Lacoste has colour. I've never seen a picture by him—only these reproductions. But he has design, which is the beginning of art."



CANNON ROCK

From the picture by Winslow Homer. Metropolitan Museum, New York



## He Recovers and—Paints Again

“Is Charles Lacoste another of your discoveries?” I asked. “His is a new name to me.”

“Charles Lacoste is hardly known in this country. A French book was sent to me the other day for review, *Peintres de Races*. Lacoste, with Dufrénoy, was chosen to represent France. I fastened on Lacoste immediately. He seemed like a lost relation. His work sounds the new harmonious note of calm, contemplative landscape painting, nature lying out simply, broadly and restfully, the kind of landscape that I have been dreaming about, and that in my heart I have always wanted to paint. Lacoste’s *Les Pyrénées* consoles and vitalises me in the same moment: it summons the profound, Beethoven-like feeling so welcome to a man of my mature years.”

Slowly he shook his head.

“The days when I want excitement lessen. The days when I crave for the peace which passeth understanding increase. But come to breakfast! This may be our farewell meal for the present. I am off to-morrow.”

Locking his arm confidentially in mine he said, as we walked down the hill:

“There’s a little, white, sunny flat in Paris, on the fifth floor of the Rue Notre Dame des Champs. Faith, Honour, and myself will keep house there this winter, and I shall draw, draw, draw.”

“So you’re going to give up writing again and paint pictures that you will roll up and put away in the box-room.” I laughed aloud.

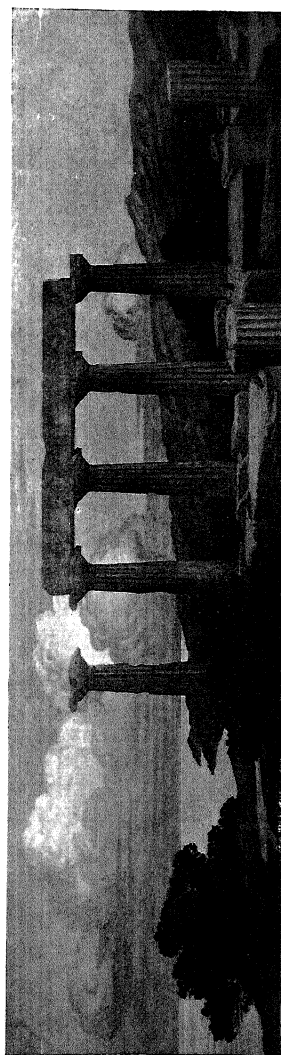
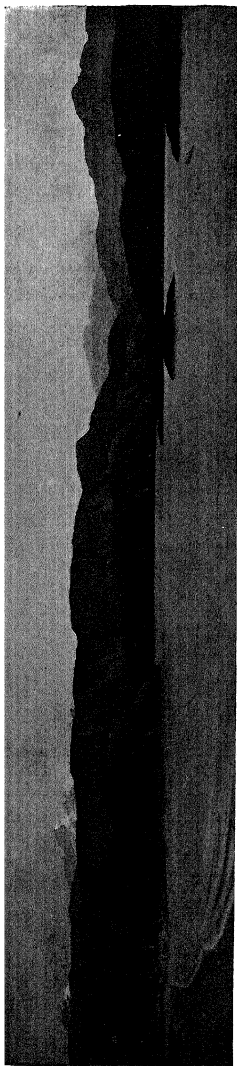


## Eighth Week

"Hush! Did not the great Emerson say that consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds? I am I. It's no good pretending to be John Burns or Kitchener, or Solomon J. Solomon or Robert Ross."

We breakfasted in his room at the open window, revealing the vast views of the Down country about which he was becoming æsthetically fanatic. It was a day to remember, windless, with a lovely light, very still, and the air was fragrant with spring scents. And while Claude talked of the future and the joy that he and his sisters were to find in Paris (was there ever a man so ecstatic when in hope, so hopeless when in despair?), I was studying two long photographs that extended across the top of the screen.

"So they attract you," he said, turning swiftly to me. "Appreciation dawns in your eyes. Yes: Ménard is also in the contemplative big line landscape category, one of the most accomplished exponents. How well I remember the joy his vast landscape decorations gave me, in the New Salon of 1906, I think. He called them *Pays Antique*. In one, solemn columns suggest the fleeting episode of man in the eternal solemnity of nature: in the other, there is no hint that man has ever disturbed the august silence of lake and mountain, except the smoke of the two fires—the incense of adoration offered to the Eternal Spirit. Now tell me, would not anybody rather live with those two ageless landscapes than with a brilliant, fussy painting by one of the brilliant, fussy moderns?"



C. 1882

LANDSCAPE DECORATIONS

By Émile René Méraud



## He Recovers and—Paints Again

"It depends upon the temperament," I hazarded. "Many people prefer a brilliant man to a brooder. I like you because there is something of each in your composition."

Suddenly Claude Williamson Shaw started and brought his fist with such force upon the table that he broke the cream-jug. Ignoring the damage, and the distress of Faith and Honour, he cried:

"I wonder if Ménard would take me as a pupil. I'll try, by Jove, I'll try! Do you know since I have been dreaming of august, contemplative serene landscapes of silent nature, broadly seen, broadly treated, that are so much more suitable for the decoration of the walls of a house than animated, chattering landscapes, I seem to find the trail and the tradition of them everywhere. I find it in William Dyce's *Pegwell Bay* in the Tate Gallery, an intimate picture that I shall always love: Dyce, who as a youth met the German 'Nazarenes' or 'Pre-Raphaelites,' and was influenced by them to his great gain. The figures in this quiet, sunset, particularised scene, are not obtrusive. They just seem to have occurred, and I hardly know, until I am told, that the great comet of 1858 is flaming in the sky. Why have Pre-Raphaelite pictures such an enduring charm? Brett, sometimes, was almost a Pre-Raphaelite. He shows a delicate feeling for the quiet, spacious, decorative landscape in *From the Dorsetshire Cliffs*, illuminated by sunlight, the rays broken by the floating clouds throwing purple shadows

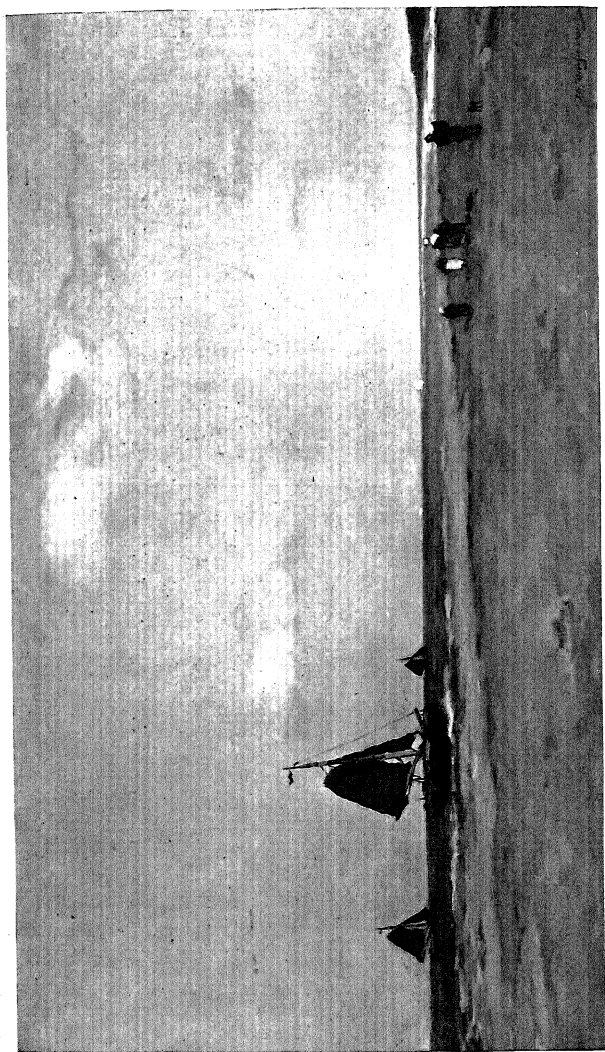
## Eighth Week

on the green vastness. That, too, is a picture to live with. What a window it would open in a dark room! Repose, simplicity, breadth, light—that is what I want in a landscape.

“George Clausen in his magnificent *A Morning in June*, which has gone to Johannesburg, certainly gives repose, simplicity, breadth, light; and he adds to those attributes, gaiety. Here, indeed, is the wide, green world parching under the hot sky—here is England at high summer, done by a man who has become a Master, yet who is always a student, bringing to every subject a fresh eye and an experimental technique. What space there is in this vision of a summer day, what distance, and how cleverly the foreground is contrived! Clausen is slowly but surely finding himself. A diligent path this master-pupil has trodden from the highway of Bastien to that of Monet; but he is entirely himself in this summer day, and also in that little gem of radiant space he painted two or three years ago called *The Green Fields*.

“The greatest of the modern Dutchmen—the Marises, Mauve, and Weissenbruch, derive from nobody. They have simply looked at the beauty, pearly opalescent, of their own land, the most paintable country in the world, and have painted it. Listen! I may change my mind, I may think differently ten years hence; but I do believe now, at this moment, that landscape painting, if you take the highest development of it to be atmosphere





THE DUTCH SHORE

From the picture by J. H. Weissenbruch in the Municipal Gallery, The Hague

## He Recovers and—Paints Again

and light, has reached its apogee in the work of James Maris, Mauve, and Weissenbruch. There is a Maris, a *Shell Gatherers* in the Mesdag Collection at The Hague, a Weissenbruch, a *Dutch Shore* in the Municipal Museum, and another *The Bridge at Noorden* at Amsterdam, and Mauves at Amsterdam and elsewhere, that, as regards atmosphere and the illusion of infinity and the ways of light, are final. I don't see how any advance can be made in that species of landscape. Look at the little picture of *The Shower* by Mauve, seven trees, seven figures, and a wet day—that is all, yet how beautiful! And that *Dutch Shore* by Weissenbruch at The Hague! The photograph does not do justice to the pearly rendering of light and atmosphere; but it shows Weissenbruch's power of eliminating all that is unessential, leaving a few sails and a few figures, perfectly placed, just enough to indicate the vastness of the sky and the quiescent sea. And if these men have said the last word on atmosphere, surely the veteran Harpignies may be said to have spoken the last word on the landscape of peace, of clarity, of austere beauty. The gift of Harpignies to the world is peace and loveliness. To few painters is it given to be able to synthetise in one picture all that they have dreamed and seen through a long life of peace and loveliness. That is the happy fate of Harpignies in *The Rising Moon*. If all the other pictures by him were lost (and all are beautiful: like Cazin he could not paint a failure), this *Rising*



## Eighth Week

*Moon* would stand as an example of his supreme achievement."

"It's my favourite landscape," said Faith.

"It was once my favourite," said Claude, "but I seem now to be reaching out towards a greater simplicity. When I visit the National Gallery to-morrow, after so long an interval, do you know what I shall hasten to see first?"

I was silent, knowing that it would be something freakish, utterly beyond my power to indicate.

"Well?"

"Oh, Lelio Orsi's *Walk to Emmaus*," I said at a venture.

"No, although that is one of those strange pictures by a lesser master that insist on unwavering affection. But Orsi will not make the first call to me. There was a Frenchman, François Bonvin, who died in Paris in 1887. He was a man of the people, and in early life worked as a policeman in the markets. He was a fine artist, this Bonvin, one of the quiet kind, who loved Vermeer and Chardin, and who, like them, painted silent pictures. One day he made a little landscape, which he called *A Village Green in France*, and which, by some happy chance, has found its way into our National Gallery. That is the picture I shall visit first, that simple French village, an early example of the tranquil movement in modern landscape painting that is now troubling and delighting me. The movement is spreading in England. I shall be quite a late follower when I

## He Recovers and—Paints Again

begin to paint. Holmes is working in that field, and Murray Smith (do you know his *Noon's Sapphire*?) and William Nicholson. Recently Nicholson had an exhibition of tranquil, big line landscapes of the Down country, thinly painted on rough canvas, very simple and spacious. I like them all, but I think my favourite is *Whiteways, Rottingdean*, a transcript of nature, subtly selected and painted with confidence. Do you know the Down country?"

"Not very well. I am not a good walker."

"Can you manage five miles?"

"In good company, yes."

"Then our day is planned," he cried, bubbling with excitement. "I can walk now as well as ever. We'll have a grand scamper, a valedictory joy-day in the Down country before we start for Paris to learn how to make pictures of the unspoiled world. Girls, put your hats on, hire a carriage to take us up to the racecourse, then telegraph to Lewes and order another to meet us by the railway arch on the Brighton Road, where the path over the Downs descends to the level. Take lunch. We'll have a glorious day. Oh yes, I can manage five miles."

That walk stands out as one of the joyous memories of the year. When in health and happy I desire no better companion than Claude Williamson Shaw. All the way, resting or walking, he sustained a running, enthusiastic commentary on the lie and colour of the land, the cloud shadows moving over the fields, the patches of sunshine here and there, the contrast

## Eighth Week

between the big natural lines of the hills, and the arbitrary geometrical patterns made by the division of the rolling hillocks into farms and fields of various crops.

"How paintable it all is," he cried, "if only one could learn the heart of it, and the secret of its charm. A comfortable country too. It's intimate, friendly, without the hurled-into-disorder wildness of Wales or Scotland."

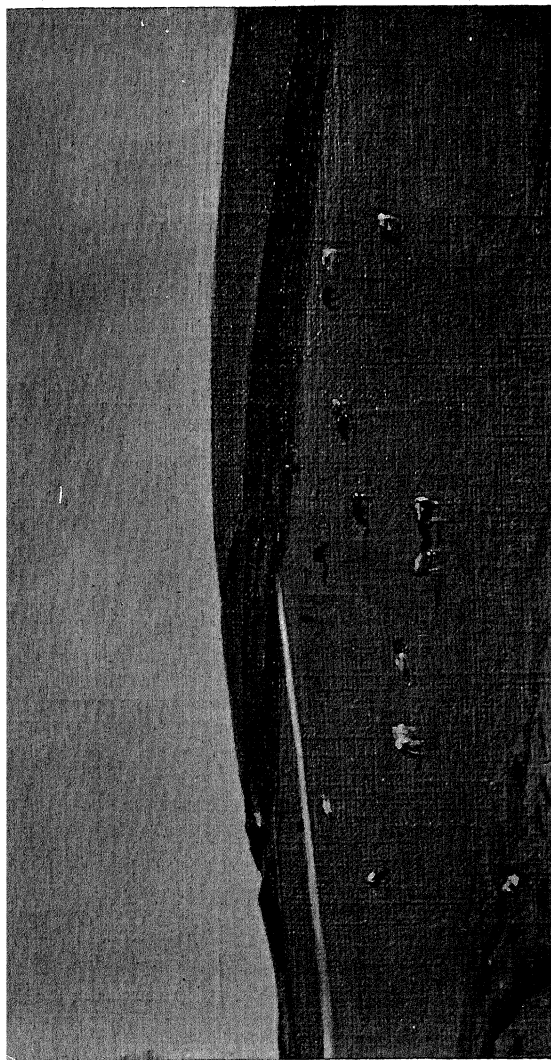
"It has been patted into shape," said Faith.

"That's good," he said. "It's been patted into shape, and now it invites me to interpret it in line and colour, according to my own whim. What an opportunity! What a glorious thing life is!"

He grasped a hand of Faith and Honour, I was bidden with a shout to join the ring, and we danced a merry-go-round about the last of the telegraph poles. Then he hopped and jumped through the railway arch and threw himself into the carriage, and all the way to Lewes he sang the song of the open road.

A week later I saw them off at Charing Cross—two devoted girls who have no desire for a vote, and a middle-aged man with a young heart, excitedly purposing to be a painter. He is on the crest of the wave now, but I know him. He will soon be down in the trough again, timorous of life, seeking consolation in art—and finding it.

Ten years ago, almost to a day, Claude had



WHITEWAYS, ROTTINGDEAN  
From the picture by William Nicholson

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## He Recovers and—Paints Again

renounced painting to become a writer. I reminded him delicately of the fact, and said:

“Will you ever find an abiding-place?”

He smiled and made a remark as the door closed that was entirely characteristic of him.

“All life is a wandering to find home,” he said. Then he added: “And it’s beginning all over again—this wonderful life—and it’s not *Good Bye, my Fancy*, as you think, it’s *Good Morrow, dear Mate*——”

The train moved. I felt a tightening of the throat, for I love the man. A little while my sight held his dancing eyes, and the pretty, pale, quiescent faces of Faith and Honour. Then a wave of hands, and I was alone—very lonely.









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